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Richard III: history's hot property

But who has joined him in our **2016 Hot 100 list**?

THE SOMME

Why it wasn't Britain's darkest day

PLUS

 **Soldiers' stories from the 1916 battle**

 **The view from the German trenches**



EXPLORE

How cotton fuelled the industrial revolution

1966

A NATION ON THE EDGE

When strikes, murders, music and a game of football transformed the country

ENGLAND'S GREATEST REBEL

Why the Duke of Monmouth was a 17th-century hero

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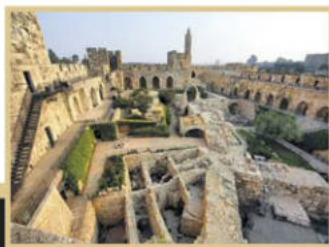
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JULY 2016

WELCOME

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MAGAZINE

“The mud, the blood, the relentless machine gun fire: to many, the battle of **the Somme** has come to represent all the most terrible aspects of the First World War. And with good reason: casualty figures on both sides were appalling and 1 July 1916 represents the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. Yet was it really just an exercise in futility – and does it stand apart from other battles Britain fought in two world wars? On the centenary, these are questions that **Gary Sheffield**, a leading expert on the battle, seeks to answer in our cover feature, on page 22. Accompanying articles consider the Somme from a **German perspective** (page 34) and from that of the **ordinary soldiers** (page 29).

Another milestone we're soon to arrive at is the 50th anniversary of England's sole World Cup triumph. It was a moment of joy (for parts of these islands at least) but came in a year when the **swinging sixties seemed to be under threat**, as the country faced strikes, demonstrations and violent crime. On page 58 Alwyn Turner surveys a year that was about far more than football.

Finally, this issue sees the return of our **History Hot 100**.

For the past few months we've asked you to tell us which historical figures you are currently most interested in. A certain Yorkist king is still top of the pile, but who else has been making history waves in 2016? Turn to our special supplement in the centre of this issue to find out.

Rob Attar

Editor

BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand



THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Tom Holland

The most decisive date in British history, in my opinion, is not 1066, but 927: the year that Æthelstan conquered York. It was a feat that was the making of England – and entitles Æthelstan himself to rank as its first king.

● *Tom looks at the Anglo-Saxon king's achievements on page 51*



Anna Keay

What I love about doing historical research is going straight to the primary sources: letters, diaries, account books. The picture that emerges from the raw material is often really surprising.

● *Anna says it's time to revise our ideas about the Duke of Monmouth on page 46*



Gary Sheffield

I've been visiting the Somme for many years. Recently I've walked some of the key ground – it is difficult to get a sense of the battle unless you know the terrain.

● *Gary re-evaluates the Somme for the battle's centenary on page 22*

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POST Subscriptions & back issues

BBC History Magazine, PO Box 279, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8DF

Basic annual subscription rates:

UK: £62.40, Eire/Europe: £64.60, ROW:

£66.60 **Editorial** *BBC History Magazine*,

Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited,

Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN



In the US/Canada you can contact us

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The Somme offensive was catastrophic for all sides – Alexander Watson tells the German story of the battle

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David Reynolds traces the factors that made bitter enemies of the USA and USSR in the early years of the Cold War

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His attempt to seize the crown ended in disaster, but does the Duke of Monmouth deserve his notoriety? Anna Keay finds out

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Why the sixties weren't so swinging: Alwyn Turner looks at a year when cracks appeared in Britain's newfound optimism

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USPS Identification Statement BBC HISTORY (ISSN 1469-8552) (USPS 024-177) July 2016 is published 13 times a year under licence from BBC Worldwide by Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, UK. Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.



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Why the Duke of Monmouth's bid for the crown ended in disaster



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1966 and all that: when the sixties turned sour

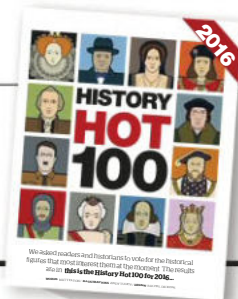


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The Cold War: how new rivalries were born

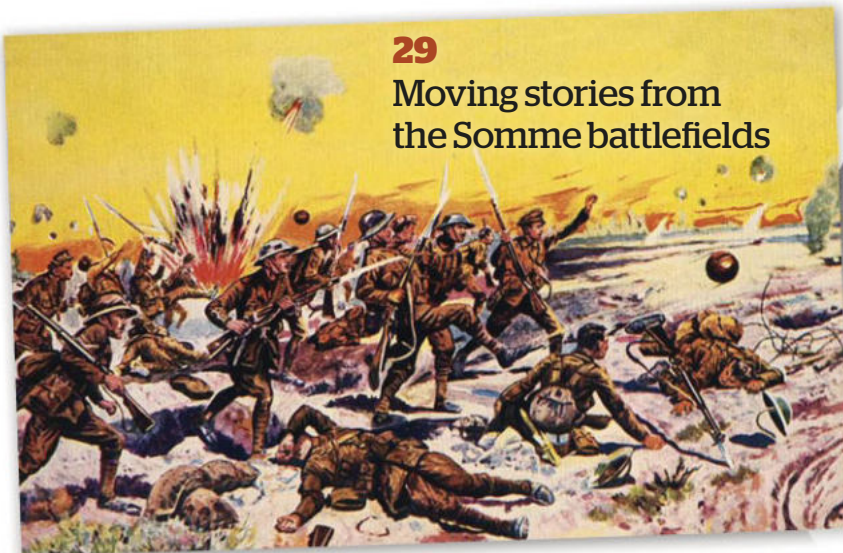
ALAMY/TOPFOTO/GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/AGF - IMAGES

History Hot 100 supplement
We reveal the historical figures
making the biggest waves in 2016



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the Somme battlefields



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The other side:
Germany's agony
on the Somme



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**“THE SOMME IS
REGARDED AS A
UNIQUELY TERRIBLE
SLAUGHTERHOUSE”**



Dominic Sandbrook highlights events that took place in **July** in history

ANNIVERSARIES

13 July 1793

Jean-Paul Marat is stabbed to death in his bathtub

A fervent supporter of the French Revolution is murdered by Girondin sympathiser Charlotte Corday

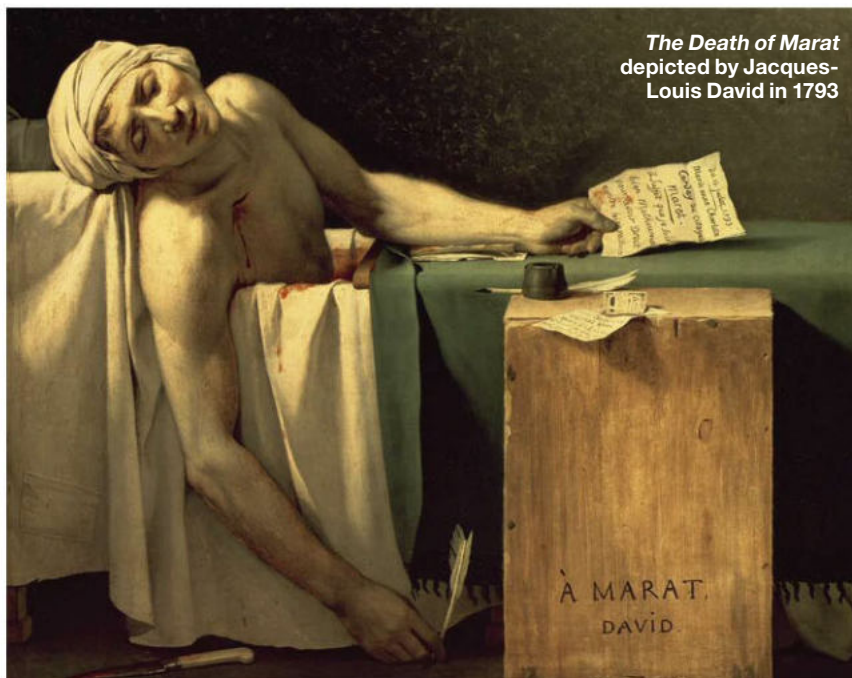
Just before noon on 13 July 1793, a young woman called Charlotte Corday presented herself at the house of the demagogic radical journalist Jean-Paul Marat, one of the most outspoken and bloodthirsty voices of the French Revolution. She had, she said, important information about a potential uprising in Normandy. But Marat's wife was unimpressed and sent her away.

That evening, however, Corday came back, and this time Marat told his wife to let her in. Suffering from an intensely painful skin disease, he was working on papers in his medicinal bath. For 15 minutes or so, he listened to what Corday had to say, and as she listed the names of disloyal deputies in the Caen region, north-western France, he scribbled their names on a sheet of paper. "Their heads," he said with

morbid satisfaction, "will fall within a fortnight".

It was then that Charlotte Corday made her move. The daughter of royalist parents, she had seen her brothers flee abroad and had reportedly been inspired by the rhetoric of the more moderate Girondin faction. Now she pulled from her corset a five-inch kitchen knife, and plunged it deep into Marat's chest. "Help me, my dear!" Marat screamed at his wife. But it was already too late; as blood gushed from the wound, he was dead within moments.

Arrested at the scene, Corday was executed four days later. Her crime was immortalised in a famous painting by the revolutionary artist Jacques-Louis David, showing Marat as a Christ-like martyr. As for the famous bathtub, it now stands in a Paris waxworks.



7 July 1807

Napoleon meets Alexander I

The tsar of Russia has to make obeisance to France

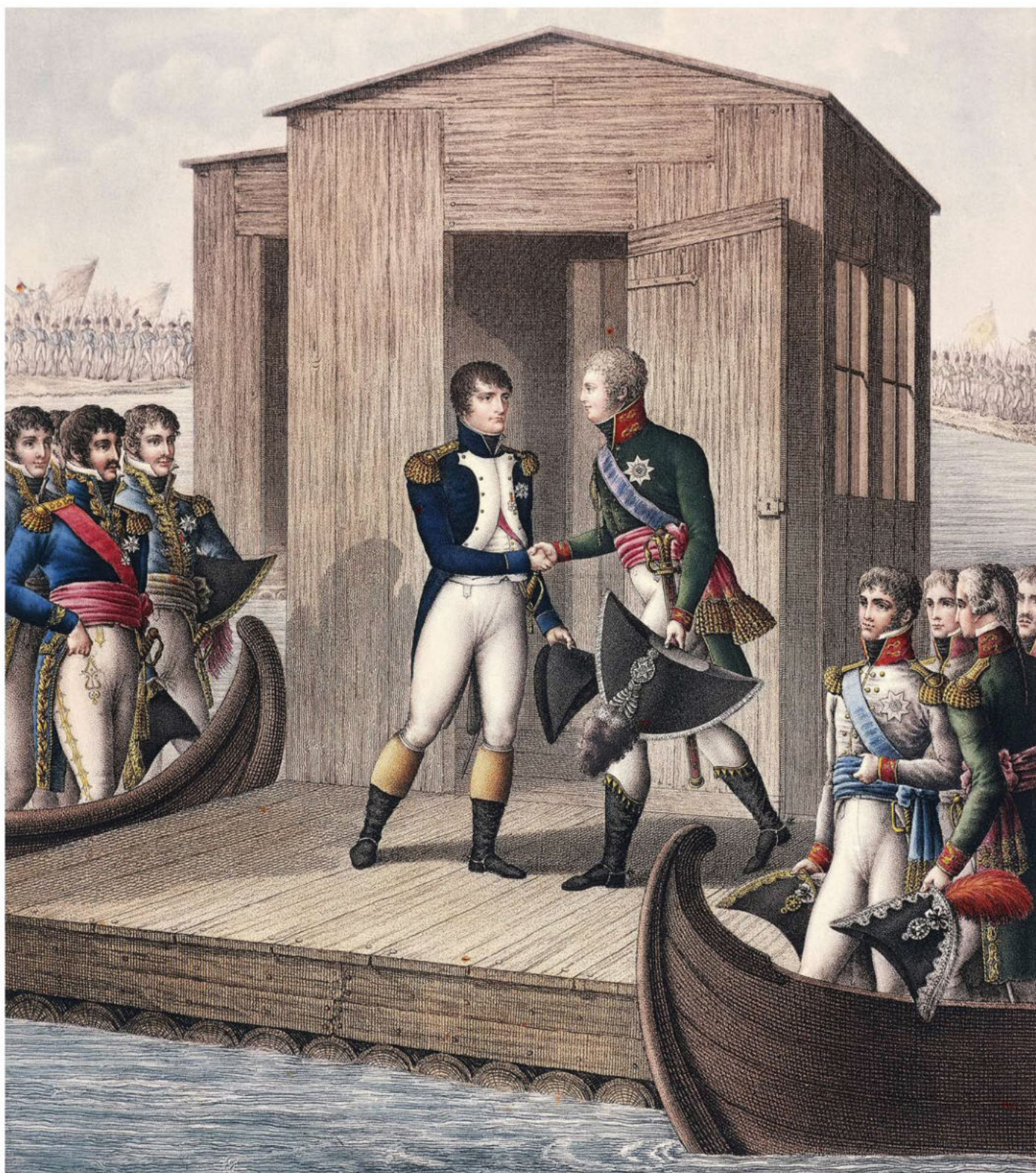
In the summer of 1807, Napoleon Bonaparte was at the height of his powers. Having crushed his adversaries at Friedland in June, the French emperor now stood on the edge of Russia itself. Now, near the town of Tilsit on the river Neman (near the border between today's Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and Lithuania), the emperor prepared to accept Russia's obeisance.

To spare the blushes of Alexander I, the peace conference was held on a supposedly neutral raft in the middle of the river. On the white marquee, the French side was adorned with a giant letter N, the Russian side with a colossal A. The story goes, however, that when the two emperors were ferried across, the French put on a spurt at the end, to make sure that Napoleon got there first. And the first words uttered by a nervous Alexander spoke volumes about his subordination. "Sire, I hate the English no less than you do," the tsar said anxiously, "and I am ready to assist you in any enterprise against them."

After days of haggling, the first treaty was signed. By now the two emperors appeared firm friends; they were even reported to have held hands and exchanged handkerchiefs, like lovelorn Jane Austen heroines. For Alexander, though, the terms were humiliating, with the tsar agreeing to join Napoleon's anti-British Continental System, to hand over the Ionian islands to France, and to pull Russian forces out of Wallachia and Moldavia. For Napoleon, the treaty was a triumph. But Alexander was more cunning than his new friend realised. "The alliance with Napoleon," he wrote in a letter, "is only a change in a way we will fight against him." In the long run, of course, Alexander would have the last laugh.

BRIDGEMAN

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and presenter. His new series about Britain in the 1980s is due to air this summer on BBC Two



Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I meet on a raft floating in neutral territory in the middle of the Neman river. The resulting peace conference was a triumph for the French leader but Alexander would soon bite back

GETTY IMAGES



25 July 1965

To the horror of purists at the Newport Folk Festival in the US, Bob Dylan appears with **backing from electric guitars**, changing the course of rock music history.

11 July 1921

After a row with fellow members who want to merge with a rival party, **Adolf Hitler briefly resigns** from the National Socialist German Workers' Party.



12 July 1561

In Moscow, **Ivan the Terrible** presides over the consecration of a new church just outside the Kremlin, known today as St Basil's.



Louise Brown was born after in vitro fertilisation, a medical breakthrough that has gone on to help many parents to have a child

25 July 1978

World's first IVF baby is born

A new technique to help infertile couples attracts controversy when it results in what some call a 'test tube baby'

If you had visited the Oldham and District General Hospital in the last week of July 1978, you might have been surprised to find security especially tight. But there was good reason for the heightened sense of tension. For it was here, shortly before midnight on 25 July, that Lesley Brown gave birth to her daughter Louise – then widely described as the world's first 'test tube baby'.

Today, when so many parents worldwide have benefited from the

medical miracle of in vitro fertilisation (IVF), it seems remarkable that little Louise's entrance into the world attracted such controversy. The process had been pioneered by the consultant gynaecologist Patrick Steptoe and the Cambridge research scientist Robert Edwards, who selected Mr and Mrs Brown from thousands of potential couples. Yet the next day's headlines were full of predictions of disaster, with some columnists even talking of

'Frankenbabies', while some Catholic leaders were quick to object. "I have grave misgivings," declared Cardinal Gordon Gray, the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, "about the possible implications and consequences for the future."

For the Brown family, that moment on 25 July was of course one of unutterable joy. But letters poured in from across the world, many of them downright abusive. One parcel from California contained a series of letters covered in red liquid, a broken glass test tube and a plastic foetus.

Still, there were messages of support, too. "I fear that you will find yourselves on the receiving end of all the usual criticism and condemnation that follows any medical breakthrough, so am writing to try in a tiny way to even things up," read one letter, sent all the way from Australia.

18 July 1290

King Edward I expels the Jews

Jewish homes and property are seized by the crown

There had been Jews in England ever since the Norman Conquest, but by the late 13th century there were still no more than 3,000 of them. Even so, England's Jews played a crucial economic role as merchants and moneylenders, which earned them considerable resentment from their Christian neighbours. And as the 13th century wore on, the pressure began to increase.

In 1217, following a papal edict, Henry III ordered that all Jews wear distinctive clothes. In 1275 his son, Edward I, issued a Statute of Jewry, which mandated that all Jews over the age of seven should wear a distinguishing yellow badge – a development that now carries deeply sinister overtones.

On 18 July 1290, Edward went even further. Having spent years fighting in Wales, the king was deeply in debt and was now proposing to levy heavier taxes than ever. He had already imposed stiff financial penalties on England's Jews



A man raises a club before three Jews, shown in a medieval chronicle. In England Jews were resented by some of their Christian neighbours and had financial penalties imposed on them

and had even insisted that all debts to them must be transferred to the crown. Now, in exchange for a parliamentary vote to approve new taxes, Edward issued an Edict of Expulsion.

To modern eyes, the terms of Edward's edict seem remarkably savage. He ordered all sheriffs in England to ensure that by 1 November, All Saints' Day, the Jews were gone from England. Their homes and property were forfeit; they could take only what they could

carry. To England's Jewish community, the news of 18 July must have fallen like a bombshell. But there was nothing to be done; no chance of a reprieve, no hope of a repeal.

By the end of the year, the Jews were gone from England. Most of them probably sailed to France, though we will never know for sure. Not until 1655, when Oliver Cromwell agreed to readmit them, did Jewish settlers return to English shores. ■

COMMENT / Michael Prestwich

"Expulsion offered a solution to the problems of debt repayment"

There is a straightforward financial explanation for Edward I's expulsion of the Jews. By 1290 the Jewish communities had been so heavily taxed that there was little prospect of the crown squeezing any more money from them. The king had hoped with his Statute of Jewry of 1275 to persuade the Jews to abandon money-lending and to take up agriculture and lawful trade, but this had not worked. For those who had borrowed from Jewish financiers, including many in parliament, expulsion offered a solution to the problems of debt repayment, problems often made worse when the debts had been sold

on to Christians. For the king, the tax agreed in parliament yielded far more than the Jews could ever have paid; it was the largest single tax collected in the Middle Ages.

Was there also a dark anti-Semitic element to the expulsion? Malicious atrocity stories, many detailing ritual child murder, circulated. For Edward, expulsion offered both financial rewards, and spiritual benefits. It is not clear whether he was personally anti-Semitic, but he supported efforts to convert Jews and may have felt frustrated at their lack of success. He replied to a Jewish protest in parliament in 1290 over the forcible baptism of a Jewish

boy, declaring: "The king will not revoke the baptism; and they do not complain about specific persons, therefore nothing is to be done."



Michael Prestwich is professor emeritus (medieval history) of Durham University. His latest book is *Medieval People* (Thames & Hudson, 2014)



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Cold case Convicts return from work in Siberia's mines in this c1880 illustration. New research into a 19th-century rebellion of such inmates suggests that it may be merely the stuff of legend

Revealed: the Russian rebellion that never happened

It inspired generations of Russians to defy authority – yet new research shows an influential 19th-century revolt was a fiction. By **Matt Elton**

He may not be well known outside of Russia, but for generations of revolutionaries Ivan Sukhinov was an inspirational figure. Not only did he take part in the Decembrist Revolt of 1825, which unsuccessfully aimed to overthrow the country's autocracy, but he also went on to lead a thwarted rebellion of inmates in the tsars' vast prison camp of Siberia.

The only problem? The Siberian revolt never really happened. That's the conclusion of Daniel Beer, whose book, *The House*

of the Dead: Siberian Exile Under the Tsars, is published this month by Allen Lane.

Sukhinov was sent to Siberia for his part in the Decembrist Revolt, arriving in the Nerchinsk mining region in 1828. It was here that he was to meet a tragic death in circumstances that were to turn him into a hero for later generations of revolutionaries.

"In the May of that year," says Daniel Beer, "a drunken penal labourer in Nerchinsk knocked on the door of the



Fight the power Decembrist rebels gather in St Petersburg in this 19th-century depiction. One such insurrectionist, Ivan Sukhinov, was exiled to Siberia and later came to be “regarded as a heroic opponent of tsarist tyranny”, says Daniel Beer

mine overseer and reported that a conspiracy was being hatched among the penal labourers. The drunk man claimed that, under Sukhinov’s leadership, the labourers planned to seize soldiers’ weapons from the armoury and, once armed, to enter the barracks where the penal labourers lived and force them to escape. They then intended to burn the entire settlement around the mine, destroying everything in their path.”

Such a claim could not be ignored. The accused were tortured into confessing that Sukhinov had indeed masterminded a rebellion. Sukhinov was spared torture because he was an army officer, and maintained his innocence throughout.

But it was not enough. Sukhinov was convicted by a tribunal and condemned to lashings that would almost certainly have been fatal. Political wrangling led to this sentence being commuted to a more honourable death by firing squad, but this turned out to be a formality: Sukhinov hanged himself in his prison cell before he reached the execution site.

Yet surprisingly, Beer’s research shows that the crime of which Sukhinov was accused has no basis in reality. “My work in Russia’s archives shows that

“There was never any evidence, beyond the claim of a drunk man trying to gain favour with the authorities”

this so-called ‘conspiracy’ is mentioned in publications in the 19th and 20th centuries, but all cite the state’s findings as if there had been a proper investigation,” he says. “There was no evidence, beyond the claim of a drunk man trying to gain favour with authorities, and confessions beaten out of other exiles.”

Yet Beer argues that the dignified way in which Sukhinov chose to end his own life meant that his story was later told and retold around Russia – and the truth became blurred. “A rash of Decembrist memoirs published in the second half of the 19th century repeatedly returned to the story of Sukhinov’s apparent tragic and desperate bid to free his comrades,” he says. “The hapless Decembrist was regarded as a heroic opponent of tsarist tyranny. Supporters of the Decembrist Revolt and subsequent generations of revolutionaries were keen to see evidence of a rebellion not fully extinguished, even in the mines of eastern Siberia.

“For the Soviets, Sukhinov was seen as a paragon of revolution, an officer who fought to forge an alliance with Siberia’s criminals. And, after the Bolsheviks seized power in the Russian Revolution of 1917, he became enshrined in the growing pantheon of revolutionary forebears.”

Beer suggests that this episode shows how isolated incidents can gain unintended momentum across history: “Stories matter in politics and, across the 19th and 20th centuries, this ‘conspiracy’ offered an inspiring narrative of a failed rebellion against the odds and a defiant protest against state brutality.”

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

Early Shakespearean theatre was oblong

Excavations on the former site of a theatre, in which some of William Shakespeare’s plays may have had their first performances, show that the structure would have been rectangular in shape rather than oval as had been expected. The Curtain theatre, located in what is now the London borough of Hackney, opened in 1577 and seems to have been converted from a tenement block. Its shape was described as “a total surprise” by a leading Shakespeare expert.

Chinese people brewed beer 5,000 years ago

Beer may have been enjoyed in China as far back as 5,000 years ago, material found at a dig in the Shaanxi province suggests. Researchers found traces of barley and equipment used in fermentation dating from between 3400 and 2900 BC. The find, which is the earliest direct evidence of beer-making in China, suggests that people in the country adopted the drink at around the same time as people in Egypt and Iran.

A Polish war museum has sparked debate

Plans to stop work on a new Second World War museum in Poland have been criticised by leading historians and academics from the US and Europe. The centre, which is still being built, was set to tell the story of the conflict in the context of the aftermath of the First World War and the rise of authoritarian regimes. However, Poland’s new conservative government has expressed a desire to merge it with another museum.



A rendering of Poland’s new war museum, which may never be built

BRIDGEMAN/PA IMAGES

ANIMALS

The curious tale of the disappearing police dogs

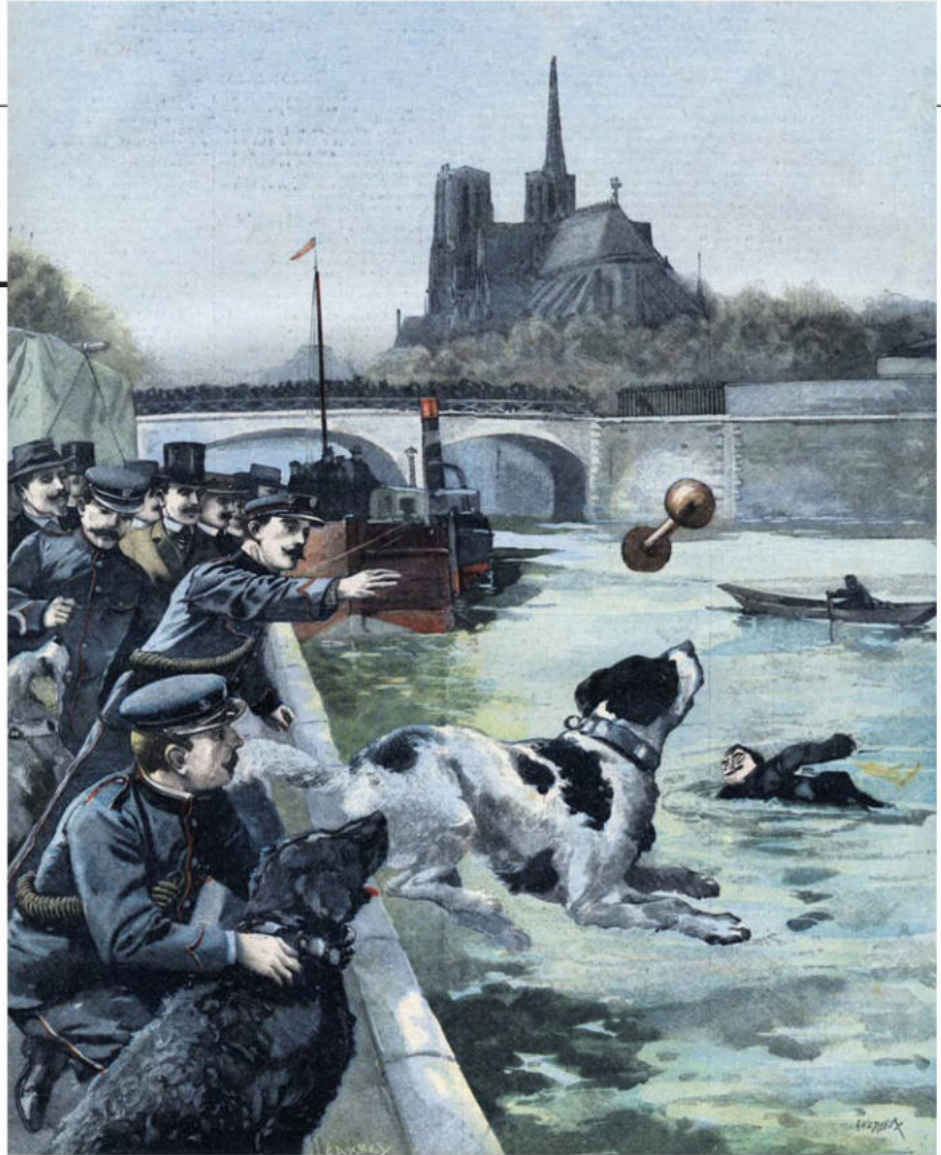
In the years after the First World War, police dogs all but vanished from the streets of Paris. A new study explores what happened...

In 1905, two new members joined the police force of a commune in northern France. Specifically chosen to deal with the area's 'brigands', they were a special breed of crime-fighter whose skills included finding hidden wrongdoers, fending off attacks from assailants – and jumping over obstacles. These new recruits were police dogs, making French forces some of the first to use them for large-scale detective work (Britain adopted them soon after). Yet their debut was followed, just a few years later, by their almost complete absence from France's streets. So what led to their disappearance?

"There were high hopes that intelligent, well-trained dogs could help to reduce crime and protect policemen," says Chris Pearson, author of the research that's been published in the *Comparative Studies in Society and History* journal. Such animals had been effectively used to tackle urban crime in Belgium, and stories of this success convinced officers in Paris to train dogs to do the same. The city was being menaced by violent gangs, and the police promoted dogs as the logical next stage in their attempt to defeat them.

This was a period in which Darwinist views of evolution were being developed following their foundation in the previous century. And, if humans had more in common with animals than previously thought, might animals such as dogs be able to show signs of useful intelligence?

Yet expectations about what police dogs could achieve soon proved unrealistic. "In 1907, a journalist visited a police dog called



The long arm of the paw A French police dog is put through its paces in this early 20th-century newspaper illustration. "There were high hopes that intelligent, well-trained dogs could help reduce crime," says Chris Pearson

Max in order to to assess his intelligence," says Pearson. "The journalist concluded that Max was 'no psychologist' because he began barking at him, suggesting that Max could not distinguish him from a gang member. The episode sheds light on contemporary doubts about police dogs, but also on the belief that felons looked different, and were different, to the rest of society."

This fear that criminals were a distinct group of people born with criminal tendencies was accompanied by concerns that some sections of society had the potential to revert to a feral, animalistic state. Comparative psychologists studied human and animal intelligence and

concluded that the distinctions were not all that great – and the 'beast within' was all too close to the surface. These concerns were soon applied to animals, too: it was all very well training up police dogs to be obedient and useful, but might they not devolve back to their inherent bestial ways?

Pearson suggests that these worries led to police dogs being seen as unpredictable and untrustworthy. The numbers of such animals, so eagerly adopted just a few years before, dropped dramatically: in 1911, the canine contingent of the Paris police force was 145; by 1916, it was 40. Their use in France was discontinued entirely after the First World War and only returned as a nationally established service in 1965.

"Studying the use of police dogs in this period is not just a platform for exploring the changing attitudes towards dogs in one particular time and place," argues Pearson. "It also allows us to think about the ways in which views of human and animal intelligence has changed over time." *ME*

One journalist, writing in 1907, concluded that Max the police dog was "no psychologist"

The historians' view...

Have US voters always gone for radical candidates?

The battle lines are drawn: wild card Donald Trump is likely to be fighting for a place in the White House against deep-dyed establishment figure Hillary Clinton, who has already called it home. Two historians look at how renegades and well-known dynasties have fared in previous presidential clashes

Interviews by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

“Anti-establishment rhetoric is designed to attract disillusioned voters. As dissatisfaction increases, so does the attraction of populist campaigns

MICHAEL CULLINANE

There is a long tradition of populism and anti-establishment politics in US presidential elections. Candidates have endeavoured to characterise themselves as a person-of-the-people, although most have had considerable experience working in Washington. This year is different. The major political parties in the US have never seen an outsider like Donald Trump.

Presidential candidates have regularly been heralded as populists. Andrew Jackson, often called the first populist, set the trend with his 1824 and 1828 campaigns to unseat the old party order. But Jackson was an insider masquerading as an outsider, a former congressman, Tennessee lawyer and military governor. He was a different kind of politician but indubitably establishment. Even the populist People's party, founded in

1892 and dissolved in 1908, was led by congressmen, state bureaucrats and political spin doctors. Democrat William Jennings Bryan, the perennial populist, served two terms in congress before running for president in 1896, 1900 and 1908. Of the latest breed, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas calls himself an enemy of the Washington establishment, despite his career as a policy adviser, solicitor general and congressman.

Trump, however, casts a different profile. With no previous experience in politics, law or government and no evidence of party loyalty (Trump has donated to the Democratic, Republican and Reform parties), his curriculum vitae is unique. That aside, he shares something with previous populists: a desire to usurp the current governing class.

Anti-establishment rhetoric is a political strategy normally designed to attract disillusioned and embittered voters. Jackson, Bryan and Trump have all fed on the collective fears (and hopes) of a cynical electorate, emotions that tend to crystallise in times of economic strife. Jackson attributed US economic woes to feeble and corrupt political leaders. Bryan attacked plutocrats as economic vampires. And Donald Trump represents the dissatisfaction of those who feel bypassed by the slow economic recovery that followed the 'great recession' of 2008.

As public dissatisfaction increases, so does the attraction of populist campaigns. However, as such campaigns evolve in

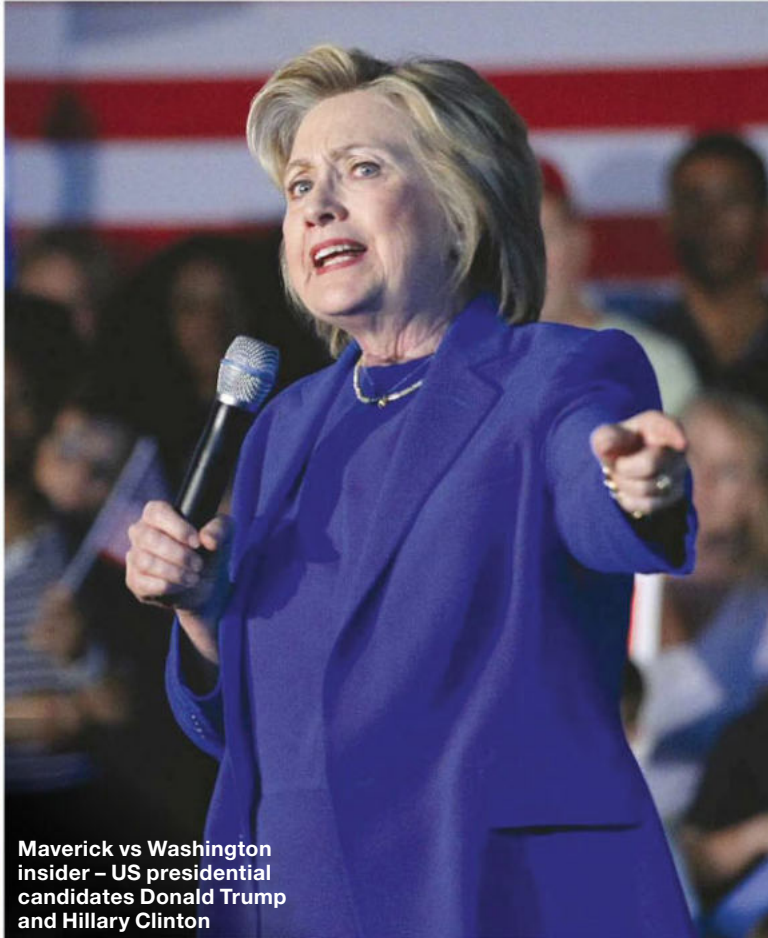
a context of public discontent, there is a mixed record of their success. Jackson transformed the US by focusing national attention on westward expansion at the expense of Native Americans, reforming the national tariff and insisting on unity over sectionalism. His impact was so great that historians still refer to the mid-19th century as the 'Age of Jackson'. Bryan, on the contrary, called for drastic monetary reforms and US isolation from global conflicts, ideas unpopular with the electorate and, consequently, he is overlooked in popular memory. The record of success is even less impressive for those populist campaigns of third-party candidates. The Greenback party (1870s–80s), the Progressive party (1912 and 1924), the Dixiecrat party (1948), the Independent party (1968) and Ross Perot's 1992 campaign that spawned the Reform party (1996) all failed to win elections, suggesting populists require the support of a major party.

That Donald Trump has seized control of the Republican party gives him a real chance of winning the election. And because his personal background as an outsider bears no resemblance to past campaigns, it is difficult to predict how the 2016 battle will play out.



Michael Cullinane is a reader in US history and programme director for history at Northumbria University Newcastle





Maverick vs Washington insider – US presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton



Andrew Jackson, 7th US president, used strident, blunt language to bypass congress and connect directly with grassroots voters



Franklin D Roosevelt (sitting, third right) with his immediate family – part of the New York clan that produced two presidents

“There was the sense of a family brand standing for something. Political dynasties give voters a sense of seasoned hands in charge

IWAN MORGAN

The US has always seen itself as a place that threw off monarchy and aristocracy, so that ‘anyone can rise to the top’. But Hillary Clinton’s candidacy as wife of a former president is the latest example of family dynasties recurring in US history. They are as old as the republic. The trendsetters were the second and sixth presidents, John Adams (1797–1801) and his son, John Quincy Adams (1825–29), but dynasties have been much more evident in 20th and 21st-century politics. Distant cousins Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909) and Franklin D Roosevelt (1933–45) were of a different partisan stripe as presidents, but the Democratic FDR benefited from popular remembrance of good times associated with the Republican TR when winning office in depression-hit 1932. Although the sole

Kennedy president was JFK, brother Robert would likely have won the office but for his assassination in 1968 and brother Edward had to settle for being a Massachusetts senator (1962–2009) because personal indiscretions marred his presidential ambitions. The Bush dynasty is arguably the most substantial in US history. It features Prescott Bush, US senator for Connecticut (1952–63); President George HW Bush (1989–93); George W Bush (Texas governor 1995–2000, US president 2001–2009); Jeb Bush (Florida governor 1999–2007); and now Jeb P Bush (elected Texas Land Commissioner in 2014).

Several factors have encouraged this trend. There was the sense of a family brand standing for something recognisable in a political system that did not have strong, cohesive parties. The growing significance of presidential primaries in candidate selection also privileged individual over party – and name recognition was a major asset in low turnout contests. Finally, party establishments and news media naturally gravitated towards brand-name politicians so dynasts tended to develop early momentum and attract big-money contributions. Overall, political dynasties give voters a sense of seasoned hands in charge, bring celebrity to politics, and operate from a strong regional base to challenge for national leadership.

But there are many cases of the younger generation not living up to the family name.

Two of FDR’s sons, Frank and James, were elected to the House of Representatives but lacked the talent to go further. The retirement of Patrick Kennedy (Edward’s son) as Rhode Island congressman in 2011 meant that no family member held elective office in Washington DC for the first time since 1946. Jeb Bush’s obliteration in the 2016 campaign was due partly to the anti-establishment mood of the electorate and partly to the toxic nature of the family brand.

If Hillary Clinton becomes the first female president, she will likely be followed by women rising to power through avenues hitherto monopolised by men. Moreover, she will have to carry the baggage of a former president as first husband (or whatever he will be called) and will likely face charges that he exerts too much influence over her.

Whatever happens, political dynasties will continue. **H**



Iwan Morgan is professor of US Studies, and Commonwealth fund professor of American history at University College London

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- **Perspectives on Presidential Leadership** by Michael Cullinane (Routledge, 2014)
- **Reagan** by Iwan Morgan (IB Tauris, October 2016)

OLD NEWS*Beaumont fights
with lions***Gloucestershire Echo**
11 July 1899

Professor Paul Beaumont, the self-styled 'Lion King', was part of the Queen's Menagerie and Museum, a motley collection of exotic animals and curiosities that travelled the country during Victoria's reign. In 1899, they drew huge crowds to Cheltenham to see "the intrepid Beaumont enter the den with the untameable lion Wallace". Beaumont and Wallace were not an original double act; only four years earlier, a lion-tamer going by the same name had died after being mauled by his own 'Wallace'. Although hoping to build on the danger of the previous incarnation, the 'professor' did not want a repeat performance, having recently risked death by placing his head in the jaws of a lioness who had refused to let go. On the menagerie's last night in the town, a record crowd gathered. Beaumont and Wallace fought for 10 minutes before he managed to subdue the lion, leaving the crowd ecstatic and their superstardom assured.

News story sourced from *britishnewspaper archive.co.uk* and rediscovered by

Fern Riddell. Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*

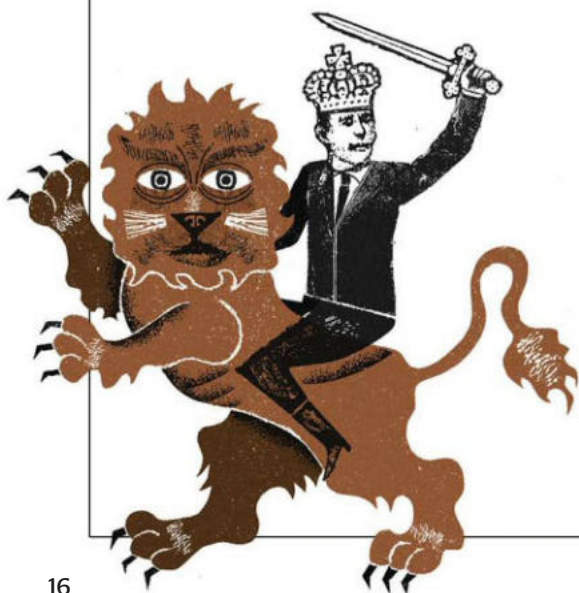


ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES

PAST NOTES
UMBRELLAS

By the time of this 1827 image, umbrella use was widespread in Britain

Julian Humphrys looks at our adoption of that essential piece of English summer kit – the umbrella

When did people start carrying umbrellas?

There's evidence of umbrellas in a wide variety of ancient civilisations, notably Egypt, China, Greece and Rome. At that time, carrying one (or probably having one carried for you) was a sign of high status. Their first use as a protection against rain rather than sun appears to have been in China about 3,000 years ago.

When did they reach western Europe?

Probably in the 17th century, although they were seen as a curiosity. But their use spread, notably in France. By the mid-18th century, umbrellas were commonplace in Paris, although some preferred to risk a soaking because carrying one was tantamount to admitting you couldn't afford a carriage.

When did the British start using them?

There are a few references to women's umbrellas in early 18th-century England. The first English man known to carry one regularly was the Portsmouth-born traveller and philanthropist Jonas Hanway. He began his 30-year habit of strolling about London with an umbrella in the 1750s, much to the fury of London's

coachmen and chairmen who saw their monopoly on covered transport being threatened. But, given the climate, it was inevitable they'd catch on and by the turn of the 19th century many were carrying them.


Were they accepted everywhere?

Not completely. In 1814, during the battle of Bayonne, the Duke of Wellington sent a terse message to some officers. It read: "Lord Wellington does not approve of the carrying of umbrellas during the enemy's firing. He will not allow the gentlemen's sons to make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the army."

On the other hand, Major Digby Tathan-Warter took an umbrella with him to Arnhem in 1944, claiming that although he could never remember passwords there was no chance of his being mistaken for a German, as only an Englishman would go into battle carrying an umbrella.

Can anyone carry an umbrella?

Everybody, it seems, except the England football manager. When in 2007 Steve McClaren made the mistake of watching his rain-soaked England team lose to Croatia from the shelter of an umbrella, the media had a field day, dubbing him 'The Wally with the Brolly'. **H**



Christopher
Ward

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LETTERS

Jutland deck defect

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

The words “there seems to be something wrong with our bloody ships today!”, after the catastrophic losses of HMS *Queen Mary* and HMS *Indefatigable*, were not just Vice Admiral Beatty’s wry frustration (*Jutland: The Battle That Won the War*, May). There was something wrong with his ships – his new battlecruisers to be precise. Although these ships were well armed and had excellent armour protection at the water line and upper hull, their Achilles heel was their thinly armoured main deck (1 inch). HMS *Queen Mary* was not hit by a classic close-range broadside but at a distance of 8.5 miles by high-trajectory gunfire, bypassing her hull armour, piercing her thin deck, starting fires, causing ammunition bunkers to explode and the ship to break in two.

HMS *Lion*, though badly damaged, would have suffered a similar fate if not for Royal Marine Major Francis Harvey (VC

posthumous). Being mortally wounded at his station, Q turret, he had the presence of mind to order the ammunition bunker be sealed and flooded. Had this not been done, a cordite fire, which shortly afterwards flashed down the magazine, could have destroyed the ship. His dying act may have saved over 1,000 lives and prompted Churchill to later comment: “In the long, rough, glorious history of the Royal Marines there is no name and no deed which in its character and consequences ranks above this.”

Jared Leavitt (former United States marine), St Albans

● We reward the letter of the month writer with our ‘History Choice’ book of the month. This issue it is *Jacobites: A New History of the ‘45 Rebellion* by Jacqueline Riding. Read the review on page 71



De Vere or not de Vere?

It is unbelievable that the people who advocate Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford as the author of Shakespeare (*Letters*, June) do not look at the facts. De Vere died in 1604, before many of the greatest plays were recorded with the censor for publication. Oxford wrote comedies under his own name – why then would he not acknowledge the ‘other’ plays? *The Tempest* was based upon events that happened in 1609, when De Vere had been dead for five years. I could go on...

The letter writer, Mr Kennedy, states that William’s whole family were illiterate. Not so. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust holds copies of the signatures of Mary Arden, his mother, and Susanna, his daughter. John Shakespeare, William’s father, was twice the equivalent of mayor of Stratford, so William would have been eligible to attend the town grammar school, where the education would have been the equivalent to today’s first year of university. In London, his school friend Richard Field, a printer, could have

loaned William copies of Holinshed and Plutarch from where he took his plots.

I would suggest Mr Kennedy reads James Shapiro’s *Contested Will* or *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* [edited by Paul Edmondson], where the leading De Vere scholar is adamant that the earl did not write the plays.

Christine Fell, Warwick

Shakespeare’s London pad

Ben Elton chooses Shakespeare as his history hero (May) and says “the fact that he [Shakespeare] bought property only in Stratford suggests he was a committed family man”. It’s true that Shakespeare bought more than one property in Stratford, but he also bought a property in Blackfriars, London in March 1613. The actual mortgage document can be viewed in the Folger Shakespeare Library’s wonderful resource of Shakespeare documentation, at shakespearedocumented.org



Shakespeare’s birthplace in Stratford – but he bought property in London too

(to which I am a contributor). It begins: “On March 10, 1613, William Shakespeare purchased the Blackfriars Gatehouse from Henry Walker (noted as a ‘Citizen and Minstrell’ of London) for £140, paying £80 in cash.”

Rosie Brocklehurst, East Sussex

Corset controversy

As a student with a focus on fashion history I was thrilled to read the article by Spencer Mizen and Edwina Ehrman about the history of underwear (*A Revealing History of Underwear*, May). This being said, I was disappointed to see that the annotations of the Victorian corset alluded to the myth that tight lacing was a real concern in the 18th and 19th centuries, and did not debunk it.

While a popular topic for caricaturists, the truth was that for the majority of women, corsets were not a threat and actually gave invaluable back support, especially for the working class. Mid-Victorian corsets simply rearranged the midriff from an oval to a circular shape without compressing internal organs or bending ribs. This created the illusion of a tiny waist, which was supplemented by bustles and crinolines, but carried no health risks. Many pictures are available of women doing activities such as tennis, cycling and rock climbing in corsets – which they certainly wouldn’t be able to do if they posed any sort of health danger!

Elizabeth Dunnett, Stratford-upon-Avon

Edwina Ehrman responds: In our Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition *Undressed: A Brief History of Underwear* we draw visitors’ attention to the health concerns surrounding stays in the

18th century and corsets in the 19th century, while emphasising the fact that they were an everyday garment worn by women of all classes. Medical concerns at the time focused on women who wore the extremes of fashion, whether



Ideal rock-climbing wear? Elizabeth Dunnett thinks corsets – like this one, pictured in 1899 – weren't as restrictive as we often believe

narrow, high-heeled shoes or tightly laced corsets. In contrast to this commentary, the vast majority of women wanted functional and well-fitting corsets that supported their breasts and backs and provided a foundation for their clothes.

Many surviving examples show damage such as bones and busks broken in two and padding added to the inside edges, suggesting that some corsets were neither comfortable nor sufficiently supple to accommodate the movements of the wearer. The women photographed participating in active sports almost certainly had the means to purchase special corsets made in shorter lengths and with fewer bones, specifically designed for riding or cycling. The sportswear case in the exhibition includes corsets worn for both sports, alongside a Jaeger catalogue advertising the “Duplex”, for “fencing, gymnastics, & c.”, which was designed to help wearers move and breathe freely.

Briggs remembered

I fully endorse the comment made by Jeremy Black in the obituary of Asa Briggs (*News*, May). A few years ago, while purchasing a second-hand copy of *A Social History of England*, I was approached by a lady who asked if I would like it signed by the author. To my

surprise, the said lady was the author's wife and on introduction, Lord Briggs, who had been sitting quietly in a corner of the bookshop immersed in a book, immediately agreed. When he discovered that I was an Open University student studying the Victorians, his obvious enthusiasm for both was immediately apparent. Although our meeting only lasted a very short time, his engaging manner and easy conversation about the Victorians was fascinating and remains one of my most valued experiences.

Rob Johnson, Selby

Corrections

● Thanks to the many readers who pointed out that John Wesley could not have sailed to Georgia in October 1835 (*Anniversaries*, May) as he would have been over 130 years old at the time. It should have said 1735. This error was introduced during editing and was not the fault of the author, Dominic Sandbrook.

WRITE TO US

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SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



@HistoryExtra: Do you agree that school history lessons only teach certain kings and queens, and if so, is it a good or bad thing?

Dean Irwin While 'great man theory' is an abysmal way to study history, it is an excellent way to learn it. At this age focus on broad sweeps - the detail can come later

Peter Tennyson I'm more worried about the narrowness of the curriculum, which seems to be purely about the Nazis and the Tudors. Without a broad grounding in the 'basics' of history the value of the subject is lost, and concentrating on narrow periods seems driven by the imperative to get good exam grades, not to deliver an education

Carol Slifka McMichael History in school should teach just enough to whet your appetite. Then, after you've become addicted to reading and learning, you can branch out

Nicola Jacob The real issue is curriculum time (or lack of it) - there's only so much history you can cover in 1hr 20mins a week so you have to be selective. We try to choose important topics that help students to understand how the world today has been created - we certainly don't just focus on the monarchs!

Matthew Bayly I think the problem is more a loss of a chronological understanding of British history. Looking at eras/themes/topics in depth is essential but a lack of understanding of the wider picture hinders overall historic development

@HistoryExtra: What is your favourite museum and why?

Alexandra Stafford The British Museum. Visited late on a weekend and practically had the whole place to ourselves. Being alone in rooms surrounded by so much antiquity was an experience I'll never forget

Valerie Murray The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Full of mystery and discovery, every visit is an exciting adventure!

Sabrina Baker Battle of Bosworth Field museum outside of Leicester. Fantastic history of the Wars of the Roses leading to the battle, the key players, weapons and strategies used

Lucy Driver The V&A hands down. I could spend hours there. There's something for everyone, and there's always something new

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JP

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MP

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JG

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RH

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The Somme 1916. An exhausted soldier asleep in a front line trench at Thiepval. Courtesy: Imperial War Museum

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Michael Wood on... **the English revolution**

“Winstanley outlined nothing less than a new vision of society”

“Recently I attended a memorial celebration for the historian John Gurney. John was an authority on the 17th-century English Revolution, especially the radical movements which came out of the Civil War when, after King Charles’s execution, for a moment there was ‘a world turned upside down’. John’s best-known works were a study of the utopian Digger movement, *Brave Community*, and the first biography of Gerrard Winstanley, their key figure. The memorial was especially poignant – and energising – because it took place in Cobham, where Winstanley had put spade into soil on the common land, announcing that the “earth is the common treasury of us all”. The commemoration was held in St Andrews Church where, ironically, in his later years the fiercely anti-clerical Winstanley was a churchwarden, his firebrand career by then behind him. There, with the people of Cobham, we listened to talks about the Diggers and over tea we reflected on Cobham’s intriguing past and the continuing relevance of the 17th-century revolutionaries’ ideas in Britain today – and indeed in the wider world.

Winstanley was born in 1609 in Wigan. His family were reasonably well-off middle class. It was especially touching that a group from his native Wigan (where there is now an annual Diggers festival) came to the memorial and we were treated to readings in a rich Lancashire accent from some of Winstanley’s most famous pamphlets, along with old Digger songs and that anthem of English Christian radicals, Bunyan’s ‘He Who Would Valiant Be’.

Of Winstanley’s early life we know nothing, except that (as he tells us) he was a conforming and unquestioning Bible-reading Christian. He was apprenticed to a draper in London and then went into business. But in the dark times of the 1640s, England was plunged into economic depression and Winstanley was bankrupted by debts and taxes. It was a time of great hardship for many, with harvest failure and near famine. Provided with a

cottage in Cobham by his father-in-law, he left London and between 1643 and 1648, while the Civil War raged, he worked as a grazier. It was a troubled time for him, yet also a period of intense reflection. In December 1648 he had a vision, in which a voice told him: “Work together, eat together – declare this abroad.” The themes of work, comradeship, and the spirit were the pillars of Winstanley’s humanity. (It should be noted, though, that despite the growing prominence of women Levellers, his ideal society would be a traditional Biblical patriarchy.)

Then, after the king’s execution and growing disillusionment of the radicals at a parliament still run by landowners and money men, came his great outpouring of writings – over 20 powerful tracts between 1648 and 1652, in which he outlined nothing less than a new vision of Christian society: a brotherhood of man breaking the stranglehold of church, money and property. It was this visionary new politics that led to the beginnings of the Digger movement in Cobham in April 1649.

It was short-lived, of course, swiftly crushed by hostile landowners and local magistrates, though the long-term impact would never be forgotten by the English left. As for Winstanley’s later life, one ex-radical later accused him of a “shameful retreat” from the ideals of 1649. But in truth he felt it was for others to take the torch on. After his first wife died, he moved to Middlesex, remarried and died a Quaker (it is easy to forget how the early Quakers were seen by the government as dangerous and even revolutionary). He died in 1676 and was buried in the Quaker cemetery in Long Acre. As for his work, he is now seen as one of the 17th-century’s great political and social thinkers, a visionary Christian and also one of the great prose writers in English literature.

During the tea break in Cobham church, his questions kept coming back: about democracy itself, about the continuing nexus of power, property and money, and about nature too. For if the earth really is our ‘common treasury’, must we not (as he urged) totally reimagine our relation to it, before it is too late? **H**

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. His latest BBC TV series was *The Story of China*. He is preparing a film on humanity’s oldest stories



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

COVER STORY

THE SO

As we reach the centenary of Britain's most notorious battle of the First World War, **Gary Sheffield** questions whether it truly was uniquely terrible

Complements the BBC's Somme coverage **BBC**



MMME

Was it really a monstrous failure?

After the apocalypse
One of the roads to Guillemont bears the scars of intense fighting. After a series of assaults and German counter-attacks, the village finally fell to the Allies in early September 1916

In the early evening of 14 July 1916, two squadrons of British and Indian cavalry launched a surprise attack on German infantry and machine-gunners near High Wood in the north-east corner of France. Carefully using the folds in the ground to conceal their advance, the horsemen of the 7th Dragoon Guards charged the defenders, got in among them, and killed and wounded a number with their lances. Stunned by the sudden assault, 32 Germans surrendered.

Their shock action over, the 7th and Deccan Horse dismounted and entrenched, but when the anticipated support from reserve infantry failed to materialise, they fell back. The two squadrons had lost about 100 men.

It was a remarkable end to a remarkable day – one that had begun at 3.25am with an artillery bombardment and a successful infantry attack on the German trenches on Bazentin Ridge. However the success was to be short-lived. To take advantage of the initial advances, reserves needed to be rushed up – a feat of organisation that was to prove beyond the capabilities of the inexperienced British Expeditionary Force (BEF). That's why, when the cavalry did get into action, it wasn't until the evening.

So the 'dawn attack' of 14 July, which promised so much, ended up gaining little. In the final analysis it was marred by administrative bungling, early gains too easily surrendered and, of course, bloodshed – an all-too familiar story in the long, brutal battle of the Somme.

The Somme has, over the past century, become a byword for futility. It is widely regarded, in Britain at least, as a uniquely terrible slaughterhouse. The casualty figures speak for themselves. Almost 20,000 British troops lost their lives on 1 July 1916 – the opening day of General Sir Douglas Haig's 'big push' against German forces – in what remains the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. By the time the battle ground to a halt in November, Britain had suffered an estimated 420,000 casualties (killed, wounded and missing), while the French and German armies had lost perhaps 200,000 and 500–600,000 respectively.

Yes, the Somme was a truly terrible battle. But the question is, was it *uniquely* terrible – a horrific aberration in the history of Britain's military endeavours? And is it fair to damn it as an abject failure?

Combined assault

The origins of the battle of the Somme lay in December 1915 when Britain, France, Italy and Russia agreed to launch synchronised attacks in 1916. Franco-British forces were to

When the Germans called off their attack on Verdun, one of the Allies' major objectives on the Somme was fulfilled

unleash a combined assault in the area of the river Somme, even though an attack further north, at Ypres, held more attractions to General Sir Douglas Haig, the commander-in-chief of the BEF. If the BEF broke out from Ypres, Haig argued, it would place key strategic objectives, such as the German-held Belgian coast, in reach. But the French insisted on the British fighting alongside them on the Somme.

The attack was preceded by a massive bombardment of German positions. With Allied guns pounding the enemy for seven days, morale among the attackers was high – surely nothing, they reckoned, could live through the artillery's onslaught. Unfortunately, a combination of faulty

tactics, the inexperience of the British gunners and lack of high explosive shells meant that the bombardment was ineffective across most of the front.

The infantry attacked on 1 July at 7.30am. Near Thiepval, 36th (Ulster) Division drove deep into the German defences, only to be forced back because the attacks of the divisions on their flanks had failed. This allowed the Germans to concentrate their fire and counterattacks on the Ulsters. Something similar happened to 56th (London) Division at Gommecourt.

In the south of the battlefield, by contrast, the British and, even more so, the French, made major advances. But it is the failures of 1 July 1916 that are remembered, along with the dreadful losses: 57,000 British casualties, of whom 19,000 were killed.

Before the battle, Haig hoped to break the German defences and open mobile warfare once more, but he had always recognised that a back-up plan of limited advances was essential. The failure to break through on the first day of the battle made that contingency a reality. Fighting from 1 to 13 July took the form of a number of small-scale or attritional attacks, usually costly in lives.

British losses were enormous. But so were German. With the defenders under enormous

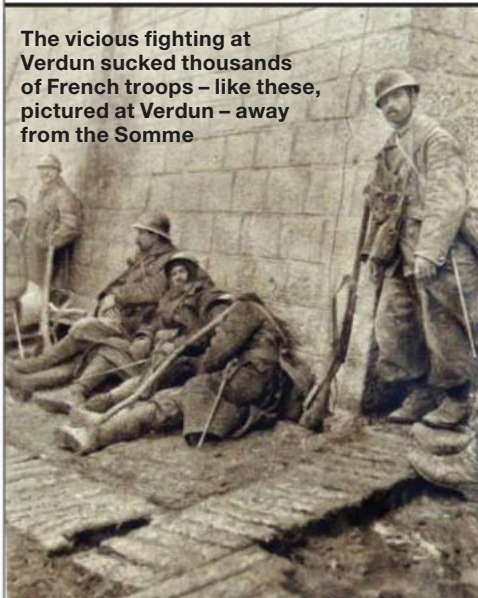
The killing fields

The map on the right shows the front line at the start of the battle of the Somme, and the Hindenburg Line, to which the Germans retreated in 1917. The map below shows the front line on 1 July, 14 July, 15 September and the close of the battle in November, when the Allies had gained seven miles.



Five defining moments on the Somme

The vicious fighting at Verdun sucked thousands of French troops – like these, pictured at Verdun – away from the Somme



1 The BEF takes the lead

Unexpectedly, it was the BEF and not the French army that contributed the most troops to the first stages of the Somme. The initial plan had the French taking the lead. However on 21 February 1916 the Germans attacked around the French city of Verdun. The fighting there sucked in large numbers of French divisions, forcing the progressive scaling back of the French contribution to the forthcoming offensive.

If the battle-hardened French army had assumed the lion's share of the fighting rather than the inexperienced British, what would the outcome of the Somme have been? It's a fascinating counterfactual.

Indian cavalrymen from the 20th Deccan Horse pictured in July 1916



2 Blood and glory on 1 July

The 1st of July 1916 was a day of mixed fortunes for the Allies. In the north of the battlefield the offensive was a disaster. In places the barbed wire was not cut, and the gunners had failed to deal with enemy artillery and machine-guns. Some divisions captured ground but were driven back through lack of support. But in the south the raw soldiers of XIII Corps, including Pals from Liverpool and Manchester, and the 8th East Surreys, who kicked footballs into action, captured all their objectives. The French also made a major advance, at a tiny cost in casualties.

Read more about the 8th East Surreys' attack on page 32



A ball that the East Surreys kicked into action, on their way to capturing all of their objectives

4 The advantage is lost

In the early hours of 14 July, British infantry crept out under the cover of darkness into no man's land. This lay between the British front line, captured from the Germans on 1 July, and the defenders on Bazentin ridge. When the attack was launched at dawn the defenders were surprised and rapidly overrun. A great victory appeared to be at hand. But, as we explain on page 24, it was not to be, for it proved impossible to get reserves to the right place rapidly enough to exploit the success. A cavalry attack turned out to be too little, too late.

New Zealand troops man their trench during the battle of Flers-Courcelette, September 1916



3 Empire troops are cut down

On 1 July the 1st Newfoundland Regiment lost 324 men killed and 386 wounded out of a total of 801, in a brave but doomed attack near Beaumont-Hamel. This was the first contingent from the Dominions of the British empire that fought on the Somme. The Australians first came into action, around Pozzières, in mid-July and August. The South African Brigade made its name at Delville Wood in mid-July, while Canadians and New Zealanders made their Somme debut in late August and September. The Somme was an important milestone in the emergence of Dominion divisions as elite formations.

5 Tanks roll into action

On 15 September 1916, the tank appeared for the first time upon a battlefield. Trench deadlock spurred the development of numerous weapons, including mortars and hand grenades, but the most significant was the armoured fighting vehicle.

Initially developed by the British, the Mark I tank deployed in the fighting at Flers-Courcelette was a fragile machine that broke down easily. Its performance was patchy, but the success of one machine at the village of Flers was reported in the press and caught the public imagination.



Tanks quickly proved a hit with the public, as this *Daily Sketch* report from November 1916 proves

The Somme / The battle



Striking from distance
An artillery piece pounds German positions. Faulty tactics and inexperience seriously compromised British shelling



Field hospital Wounded men wait to be taken to a casualty clearing station on the Somme. The British Army sustained around 420,000 casualties during the four-month battle



The devil's work Soldiers dig a communication trench through the shattered landscape at Delville Wood, aka 'Devil's Wood'. South African troops captured the position, at a huge cost, on 15 July

pressure on the Somme, General Erich von Falkenhayn, the de facto German army commander-in-chief, halted the massive offensive on French forces at Verdun (which had begun in February) on 11 July. One of the Allies' major objectives – to relieve the pressure on the fortress city – was fulfilled.

Building on the partial success of 14 July in the southern sector of the battlefield, relentless Allied attacks crashed into resolute German defences. The German policy of immediately counterattacking Allied gains meant that places such as High Wood, Longueval and Guillemont were the scene of bitter – and repeated – struggles. The South African Brigade captured Delville ('Devil's') Wood on 15 July but the Germans quickly recaptured it. British troops then retook the wood on 27 July, with fighting continuing there until early September.

Brutal training

In the northern sector of the battlefield, the fighting was equally fierce. The mostly inexperienced British empire troops and their leaders endured brutal on-the-job training on a battlefield dominated by high explosive shells. The result was confusion, courage, mistakes, the painful learning of lessons that were not always properly absorbed, and the death, wounding and traumatising of hundreds of thousands of men. Yet across

the battlefield the Germans were steadily, if slowly, driven back.

By September the French army was shouldering a larger share of the fighting and, on the 12th, it almost penetrated the German defences at Bouchavesnes. Haig launched a major push on 15 September, when 12 British, Canadian and New Zealand divisions, supported by the first ever tanks to see action, advanced about a mile – far short of the hoped for breakthrough. As ever, the losses were high. A British chaplain later wrote: "The glory and success of [the battle of] September 15th I did not see, but the cost of it I shall never forget... Whereas [at the field hospital] on ordinary days one triple tent for officers

and one for men sufficed, now all the rows of them were in use and the ground outside was covered in stretchers."

Still the battle went on, despite heavy rain that turned the ground into a quagmire. General Joffre, the French commander-in-chief, directed that the attrition would continue. The British attacked one hill, the Butte de Warlencourt, time and again. Shortly after it was captured, Lieutenant-Colonel Roland Boys Bradford VC, commander of 1/9 Battalion Durham Light Infantry, commented that the Butte "had become an obsession... It loomed large in the minds of the soldiers in the forward area and they attributed many of their misfortunes to it. So it had to be taken."

The final phase was the battle of the Ancre (13–18 November) in the north of the battlefield, where the 51st (Highland) Division stormed the fortified village of Beaumont-Hamel. Having seized this target (which was originally meant to be taken on 1 July) – and with the offensive running out of steam, and the weather worsening – the Allies closed the battle down.

Appalling casualties

In the case of some great military clashes – Hastings in 1066, Waterloo in 1815 – there were clear winners and losers. This was not the case with the Somme. When it ended, the attackers had advanced about seven miles, but

By the end of the battle, the BEF had completed its apprenticeship and was, in 1917, a much more experienced and competent army



had failed to rout the defenders, or even force them into a major retreat. Both sides suffered appalling – and comparable – casualties.

On the face of it, the Somme was a draw. But when you place it into a wider perspective, it soon becomes evident that its outcome favoured the Allies. With their greater manpower resources, the British and French empires were better equipped to sustain the dreadful attrition than the Germans. By the end of the battle, the BEF had completed its apprenticeship, had learned and applied numerous lessons, and was, in 1917, a much more experienced and competent army.

The German army, although still a formidable force, had lost key personnel. A staff officer, Captain Hans von Hentig, commented that: “The Somme was the muddy grave of the German field army... dug by British industry and its shells.”

Before the Somme, German High Command had underestimated the British Army. Now, it faced the unpalatable reality that it was confronted with a major new force on the western front. The German leadership responded in two ways. In early 1917, it abandoned the old Somme battlefield and pulled the army back to a formidable defensive position, which the British dubbed the ‘Hindenburg Line’.

Even more significantly, it took the fateful decision to try to force Britain out of the war through unrestricted submarine warfare – allowing U-boats to sink merchant vessels,

Douglas Haig, pictured c1916, has been accused of over-estimating what his army could achieve on the Somme



Why Haig was no butcher

The general's strategy in 1916 was fundamentally correct

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig is one of the most controversial generals of all time, and his performance during the battle of the Somme is central to his reputation. He has become known to some as ‘The Butcher of the Somme’, although there is no evidence that anyone called him that while the war was going on. Interestingly, until the 1960s it was Passchendaele (properly, the third battle of Ypres) that was popularly regarded as the epitome of wasteful horror, rather than the Somme.

Among the charges against Haig's conduct of the Somme is that he was an old-fashioned cavalry general who failed to adapt to trench warfare. In reality, Haig was thoroughly conversant with modern war. After the trauma of the Boer War, he played a key role in reforming the army and preparing it for a new conflict. Haig had, among other things, been responsible for modernising the British Army. Cavalry (reformed by Haig and others) continued to have a place on the battlefield, even on the Somme.

As C-in-C from late 1915 onwards, Haig oversaw the transformation of his inexperienced army of volunteers and conscripts to a war-winning force – but the battle of the Somme took place very early in this process. He was consistent in his belief that trench deadlock should be seen as a transient phase, and that the BEF should be ready for when ‘normal’ conditions returned to the battlefield. Ultimately Haig was proved right in 1918, but it took far longer to break the stalemate than he had anticipated.

Whatever else he might have been, Haig was not a technophobe. He was a keen supporter of advanced technology, such as aircraft, quick-firing artillery and machine-guns. He has been criticised for supposedly throwing away the advantage of surprise by prematurely committing a small number of tanks to battle on 15 September. This is unjust. Tanks were

simply too primitive to be war-winners, and their use to support the infantry was appropriate given the circumstances. If Haig had waited for months for large numbers to be available, the secret would probably have leaked out.

Haig has also been accused of being vastly over-optimistic, with dire results for his troops. There is some truth in this, but only some. He believed that British shelling had cut German barbed wire prior to the attack on 1 July, but that was what his intelligence staff had told him. There was a collective failure, rather than it being solely down to Haig.

But Haig was culpable for the disastrous decision to order the artillery to fire on multiple targets during the preliminary bombardment, to ease the infantry's way through the dense German positions and restore mobile fighting. The weight of

explosives was spread far too thinly, and key German positions were not suppressed. This had bloody consequences for the attacking infantry, many of whom got no further than no man's land or, at best, the enemy front line.

Haig also consistently overrated the effect of attrition on German morale. He was not well-served by his intelligence staff in this regard,

although it is not true to say that they simply told him what he wanted to hear.

Haig's performance as a general on the Somme was patchy but by no means all bad. He made mistakes and sometimes expected too much of his raw troops. On occasion he was let down by senior subordinates. But while Haig's strategy was sometimes clumsy and wasteful, it was fundamentally correct. The Somme was a critical phase in Haig's apprenticeship as a high commander, an essential stepping-stone to the victories of 1918. In late 1916, a divisional commander reflecting on 1 July suggested “that perhaps we had all been rather optimistic as to what it was possible to do”. Haig's reply was unusually candid: “Well, we were all learning.”

He helped transform his inexperienced army of volunteers and conscripts into a war-winning force

regardless of nationality. This was bound to bring the neutral USA into the war. Yet the Germans reckoned that a starving Britain would be compelled to sue for peace before American power could make a difference. In doing so they made an enormously costly strategic miscalculation.

So, while the Somme was not an Allied victory in the traditional sense, it did amount to a significant strategic success for the British and French. In this respect, it was no failure.

Wars in deadlock

The Somme is remembered – perhaps more than any other military encounter in British history – as a battle of attrition. Thousands of men lost their lives fighting for tiny pockets of land that were, in many cases, soon surrendered back to the enemy. But, for all that, the Somme was hardly uniquely attritional. From Verdun to the great battles on the western front of 1915 and 1917–18, to the massive campaigns in eastern Europe, the First World War was pockmarked by protracted, grinding bloodbaths.

And this style of combat was not confined to the fighting fronts: submarine warfare and blockade were both designed to slowly but relentlessly starve the enemy population.

What's more, attrition as a weapon of war didn't disappear with the signing of the armistice in November 1918. In fact, it was all too typical of the high-intensity military operations that dominated the first half of the 20th century – and that includes the Second

**From late 1941,
with Nazi Germany
unable to deliver a
knock-out blow,
Somme-style
slogging matches
returned to the
battlefield**

World War. Despite its reputation as a predominantly swift-moving and decisive encounter, the 1939–45 conflict often descended into deadlock too. Yes, the German army overran its enemies at lightning speed in the early years. But from late 1941 – with the Allies on the ropes but crucially not knocked out – Somme-style slogging matches returned to the battlefield.

The sheer size of the USSR, allied to the iron laws of logistics, meant that the Germans were unable to capitalise on their initial successes in Operation Barbarossa. Soviet commanders learned from their earlier defeats, and the Red Army eventually proved to be a formidable and skilful enemy.


British empire forces, although not as numerous, likewise learned lessons and became much more capable on the battlefield. The entry of the USA into the war in December 1941 brought a large, fresh and technologically advanced army into

the anti-German coalition.

The shifting balance of resources was also reflected in the skies, where Allied aircraft – once terrorised by the Luftwaffe – soon reigned supreme. So, by the middle of the war, the German advantages that had served them well in earlier years had largely been eliminated. Now, the armies were much more evenly matched. Stalemate ensued.

This deadlock tended to be shorter in duration than in the First World War. Tanks, motorised transport and aircraft helped make fronts more mobile and restored the possibility of decisive manoeuvre such as battles of encirclement, largely absent from the western front from 1915–18. Nevertheless, campaigns such as the second battle of El Alamein (1942), Stalingrad (1942–43), Kursk (1943), Monte Cassino (1944), and Normandy (1944) produced conditions highly reminiscent of the western front, complete with casualty rates that often equalled or exceeded those of a generation before.

This is the context in which we need to understand the battle of the Somme. It was not an aberration. It was like so many other battles of the early 20th century – battles that had evolved by the Second World War without losing their essentially attritional character.

Yes, British Army losses in 1939–45 were substantially lower than in the First World War. But that was the case for two reasons. First, the army was much smaller. Second, the British, unlike in 1914–18, did not have to fight for a prolonged period against the main enemy – defeat in 1940 and the Dunkirk evacuation ensured that. However, casualty rates for individual units reveal that the fighting was very bloody – especially during the campaign in western Europe in 1944–45. The level of losses during the bitter advance from Normandy to the Baltic would have been grimly familiar to infantrymen who fought on the Somme two decades earlier. 

Gary Sheffield is professor of War Studies at Wolverhampton University. A new edition of his biography of Haig has just been published: *Douglas Haig: From the Somme to Victory* (Aurum Press)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- ▶ **Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the Twentieth Century** by William Philpott (Abacus, 2010)
- ▶ **The Somme** by Gary Sheffield (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003)

TV AND RADIO

This summer, look out for the three-part BBC Two series **The Somme 1916: From Both Sides of the War**, in which Peter Barton will explore the battle from Allied and German perspectives



GETTY IMAGES



Italian impasse Allied troops at Cassino, 1944. The battle over the rubble of the abbey was reminiscent of the bloody, grinding clashes of the First World War

The **soldiers'** stories

From the battle-hardened veteran who led an audacious assault on the German lines to the headmaster who yearned to be reunited with his children, **Peter Hart** recounts the experiences of seven ordinary men who faced terrible danger on the Somme



MIRRORPIX

British empire troops leaning on a pile of shells during the battle of the Somme, cSeptember 1916



Manchester businessman May, aged 27, wrote of his fears for his wife Maude and their newborn baby as he waited to go over the top

“In waiting, there is nothing but anxiety”

Captain Charles May found the countdown to zero hour excruciating

On 1 July 1916, Captain Charles May was up against it as he gazed over the parapet towards the German lines at Mametz. He and his men knew that the Germans were ready for them and there were rumours they had hung up a defiant sign on the barbed wire: “When your bombardment

starts we are going to bugger off back five miles. Kitchener is buggered. Asquith is buggered. You're buggered. We're buggered. Let's all bugger off home!”

May's diaries express frustration as the days counted down. “We were all ready and anxious to get away. Waiting is rotten. It tries the nerves more than the actual

moment of assault. Then one has action, movement, 100 things to strive for and to occupy one's attention. But, in waiting, there is nothing but anxiety and fruitless speculation.”

In the last few days, he wrote a heart-rending letter to his wife, only to be opened if he was killed: “I do not want to die. Not that I mind for myself. If it be that I am to go, I am ready. It is the thought that we may be cut off from one another which is so terrible and that our babe may grow up without my knowing her and without her knowing me. It is difficult to face.”

Face it he did. He led his company into action and was killed by shellfire, just as they reached the German trench lines. He is buried in Dantzig Cemetery.

“He must have preferred that kind of death to the chance of being roasted”

Combat took its toll on Britain's fighter ‘ace’ Albert Ball

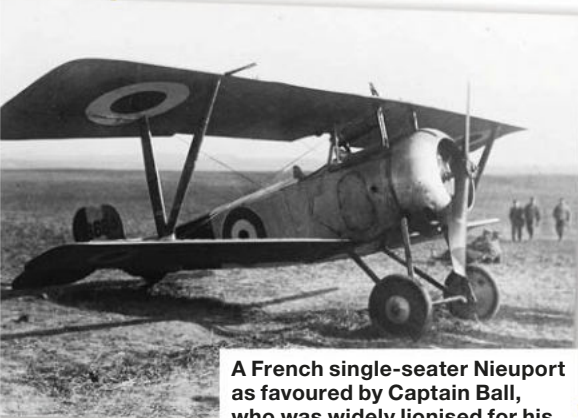
Captain Albert Ball was not like other men. Seemingly without fear, he carved out a career as Britain's foremost ‘ace’ in the skies above the Somme in the long hot summer of 1916, charging at any number of German aircraft before picking off his chosen victim. “Met 12 Huns. No.1 fight. I attacked and fired two drums, bringing the machine down just outside a village. All crashed up. No. 2 fight. I attacked and got under machine, putting in two drums. Hun went down in flames. No. 3 fight.

I attacked and put in one drum. Machine went down and crashed on a housetop.”

He summed up his method of attack: “When I get to close quarters I generally pretend that I am going to attack from above. The Hun gets ready to fire up at me as I pass over, and then I suddenly dive under his machine and if I am lucky I empty a drum into his petrol tank and down he goes.”

His personal fears only emerged in his letters home, and certainly the sights he saw began to affect him: “I fired five rounds into her. She burst into flames and fell upside down. Although she dropped like a stone, I saw her observer climb out of his seat and jump clear of the flames. He must have preferred that kind of death to the chance of being roasted.”

Ball was tortured to some extent by the murderous nature of his trade. By October he was exhausted and was sent home on training duties. When he returned to the front he was still deadly but his luck eventually ran out and he was killed on 7 May 1917. He was awarded a posthumous VC.



A French single-seater Nieuport as favoured by Captain Ball, who was widely lionised for his daring flying skills



“When this long war is done... we shall have some glorious fun”

Lieutenant Robert Smylie dreamed of the day he would return to his three young children

Something had to keep ordinary me going during the terrible ordeals of the front line. For Lieutenant Robert Smylie, born on 7 April 1874, it was the thought of one day returning to live life to the full with his little children. After graduating from London University, he had a career in teaching before rising to become the headmaster of Sudbury Grammar School. He volunteered and would serve with the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers on the Somme in 1916.

Robert wrote a poem, *My Three Kids*, in his army pocketbook. It relates in poetic form something of his warlike activities and how much he misses his children, but it also expresses his firm belief that he is fighting for their future: *And I've marched and crawled and run Night and day in rain and sun And shall do it until we've won For my kids*

The poem concludes: *And when this long war is done We shall have some glorious fun*

On 14 July, the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers attacked the German second-line positions along the Bazentin Ridge. The attack was a success, but during the assault Robert Smylie was killed by a single shot to the chest. The bullet went straight through his pocketbook, which is now preserved in the collections of the Imperial War Museum and is on display at IWM London in the First World War Galleries. He is buried in the Flatiron Copse Cemetery near Mametz.



Robert Smylie's pocketbook – on display at the Imperial War Museum – with the hole left by the bullet that instantly killed him

“Fred tied a field bandage on it and called me a lucky bastard”

A ‘Blighty’ from a piece of shrapnel answered Albert Conn’s prayers

Private Albert Conn was born of a working-class background in the East End of London in 1897 and was serving with the 8th Devonshire Regiment in 1916.

Before the Somme battle started, he witnessed a portent of what was to come: “A small bird sang on a stunted tree in Mansell Copse. We used to listen to it and wonder that amongst so much misery and death a bird could sing. A corporal visiting the fire posts heard the bird singing and – muttering, ‘What the hell have you got to sing about?’ – fired and killed it!”

Mansell Copse, just south of Mametz, would become a slaughterhouse for the Devonshires. Soon after the 1 July attack, Conn was looking for a Prussian helmet as a souvenir: “The dead had fallen in many strange, grotesque postures, some on their hands and knees as if they were praying. One

bloke, when I lifted his helmet, half the top of his nut was in it – it was full of brains like mince meat. I’m not very squeamish, but I didn’t fancy scraping that out!”

When his ‘time’ came, Albert Conn was lucky enough to get a light wound. “I was jolted out of my sleep by a sharp blow on the inside of my left leg, just below the kneecap. It was just as though somebody had kicked me. I felt it with my hand in the darkness and my hand came away sticky and wet. I knew that the flesh was torn. A piece of shrapnel had gone deep in my leg. I had received what every soldier prayed for – a perfect Blighty! I told Fred, he tied a field bandage on it and called me a lucky bastard!”

Later in the war, Private Conn would be wounded again and ultimately was discharged from the army in September 1918. But he survived the war.

“Many Germans ceased to live”

Frank Maxwell displayed his utter contempt for fear during an assault on Trônes Wood

Frank Maxwell was already a hero – at the age of 28 he had been awarded the Victoria Cross after he helped to drag some guns back to safety while under heavy fire during the Boer War in 1900.

This was an officer who led from the front. By 1916, Maxwell was commanding 12th Middlesex Regiment on the Somme. As a battle-hardened veteran, he was disturbed at the amateurism of what he saw and had already earned praise for his vigorous action to resolve difficult situations. On the night of 13/14 July, he was ordered at short notice to take Trônes Wood. “To talk of a ‘wood’ is to talk rot. It was the most dreadful tangle of dense trees and undergrowth imaginable.”

He resolved to form a single line and ‘beat’ the woods from end to end as if for a shooting party. “After infinite difficulty, I got it shaped in the right direction, and then began the advance very, very slowly. Men nearly all very much shaken by the clamour and din of shellfire and nervy and jumpy about advancing in such a tangle of debris and branches. I immediately found that without me being there, the thing would collapse in a few minutes. So off I went with the line, leading it, pulling it on, keeping its direction.”

Maxwell made his men fix bayonets and ordered them to shoot ahead into the undergrowth. When they came upon serious resistance he led the attack himself. “A curtain may be drawn over this, and all that need be said was that many Germans ceased to live, and we took a machine gun.”

Amazingly, the German resistance collapsed and Trônes Wood was secured. Maxwell’s character bemused most of his men – he seemed utterly immune to fear. He cheerfully wrote to his wife: “A man may be squandered over me without any more feeling about it, than being sorry for his poor mother or wife. I mean of course, that it does not incapacitate my system in the least.” This was not an entirely normal reaction and there is little wonder that many of his men had difficulty in living up to his expected standards of conduct.

Maxwell was soon promoted to brigadier general but was killed on 21 September 1917. He is buried at the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery and his VC is on display in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery at IWM London.

Shelled trees in Trônes Wood, where Maxwell’s company were tasked with clearing German strongpoints



“Something with the force of a cannon ball hit me full in the chest”

Within seconds of going over the top, Sergeant William Kerr found himself fighting for his life

Men came to fight on the Somme from all over the empire. One such was Sergeant William Kerr, a Canadian who had volunteered in January 1915 to serve with the 5th (Western Cavalry) Battalion, a dismounted unit in the 1st Canadian Division.

When he went over the top for the first time in September 1916, Kerr was filled with a strange exaltation. “Fear? I had no fear at all. All the pent-up dread and tension had completely left me. Like a shot I was up and over the top of the trench. In no time, bullets were flying and a wicked machine gun had opened up against us on my right. Something with the force of a cannon ball hit me full in the chest. I believed I had been killed, and in the two seconds it took me to crumple up, my lips had only time to murmur, ‘Oh mother!’ Then nothingness.”

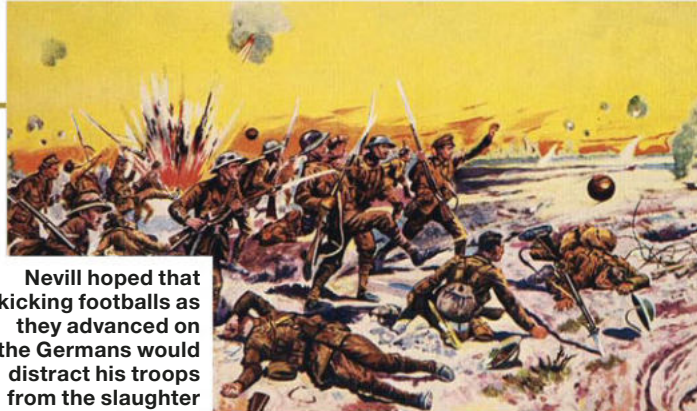
For too many men, such thoughts were the end. But William Kerr awoke. “I opened my eyes and had a minute or two to realise I was still alive. After a while I began to feel about my chest, for I didn’t know how bad I had been wounded, or what had got me. I felt my left breast pocket sticky with blood.”

After struggling to put on his field dressings, Kerr lay still and waited for rescue. At sundown the stretcher bearers arrived and carried him to the advanced dressing station in a captured German dugout. Here he was laid on a rough wire mesh bed, surrounded by other seriously wounded men.

“That was to be a terribly long night, pitch dark as it was down in the depths of the place. Two of the most seriously wounded screamed with their pains for most of the night, until one of them passed away. He was at the far end of the dugout, but I could hear the murmured, ‘He’s dead. He’s gone!’ For myself, with a dull pain all over my chest, I just lay without moving all through the night.”

Although he had been terribly wounded, Sergeant Kerr had also been fantastically lucky. When he was examined, he was told that, from the location of the entry and exit wounds, his heart must have been in the act of contracting at the instant the bullet smashed through his chest. Against all the odds, he survived and after a long convalescence would return to fight at the front in 1918.

Wounded Canadian soldiers next to a shelled-out German pill-box wait to move on to a field dressing station



Nevill hoped that kicking footballs as they advanced on the Germans would distract his troops from the slaughter

“I seem to be pretty bulletproof”

The resourceful Wilfred Nevill allayed his soldiers’ fears with the assistance of a football

Captain Nevill has long been criticised for his bravado in encouraging his men to kick footballs ahead of them as they attacked across no man’s land on 1 July – but the real story was very different.

In 1916 he was serving with the 8th East Surrey Regiment and faced with attacking strong German positions at Mansell Copse. To distract his men from their fears, Nevill had brought back the two footballs from his last leave. His colonel, Alfred Irwin, had approved the idea: “Nevill came to me with a suggestion... as he had 400 yards to go and knew that it would be covered by machine gun fire, it would be helpful if he could furnish each platoon with a football and allow them to kick it forward and follow it. I sanctioned that on condition that he and his officers really kept command of the unit and didn’t allow it to develop into a rush after the ball.”

As so many men did before they went over the top, Nevill tried to console himself and his family: “I seem to be pretty bulletproof.” One of the footballs had written on it: “The Great European Cup-Tie Final. East Surreys v Bavarians, Kick off at Zero!” The other had emblazoned on it “No referee”, to indicate that “rough stuff” was entirely appropriate.

Second Lieutenant Charles Alcock wrote of the tragedy that ensued. “Five minutes before zero time he strolled up in his usual calm way, and we shared a last joke before going over. The company went over the top very well, with Soames and your brother kicking off with the company footballs. We had to face a very heavy rifle and machine gun fire, and nearing the front German trench, the lines slackened pace slightly. Seeing this, Wilfred dashed in front with a bomb in his hand, and was immediately shot through the head.” **H**

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum. Read more from him on page 38

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WEBSITE

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RADIO


► **Voices of the First World War** links modern families with audio of relatives in that conflict. It’s due to air on Radio 4 on 27 June



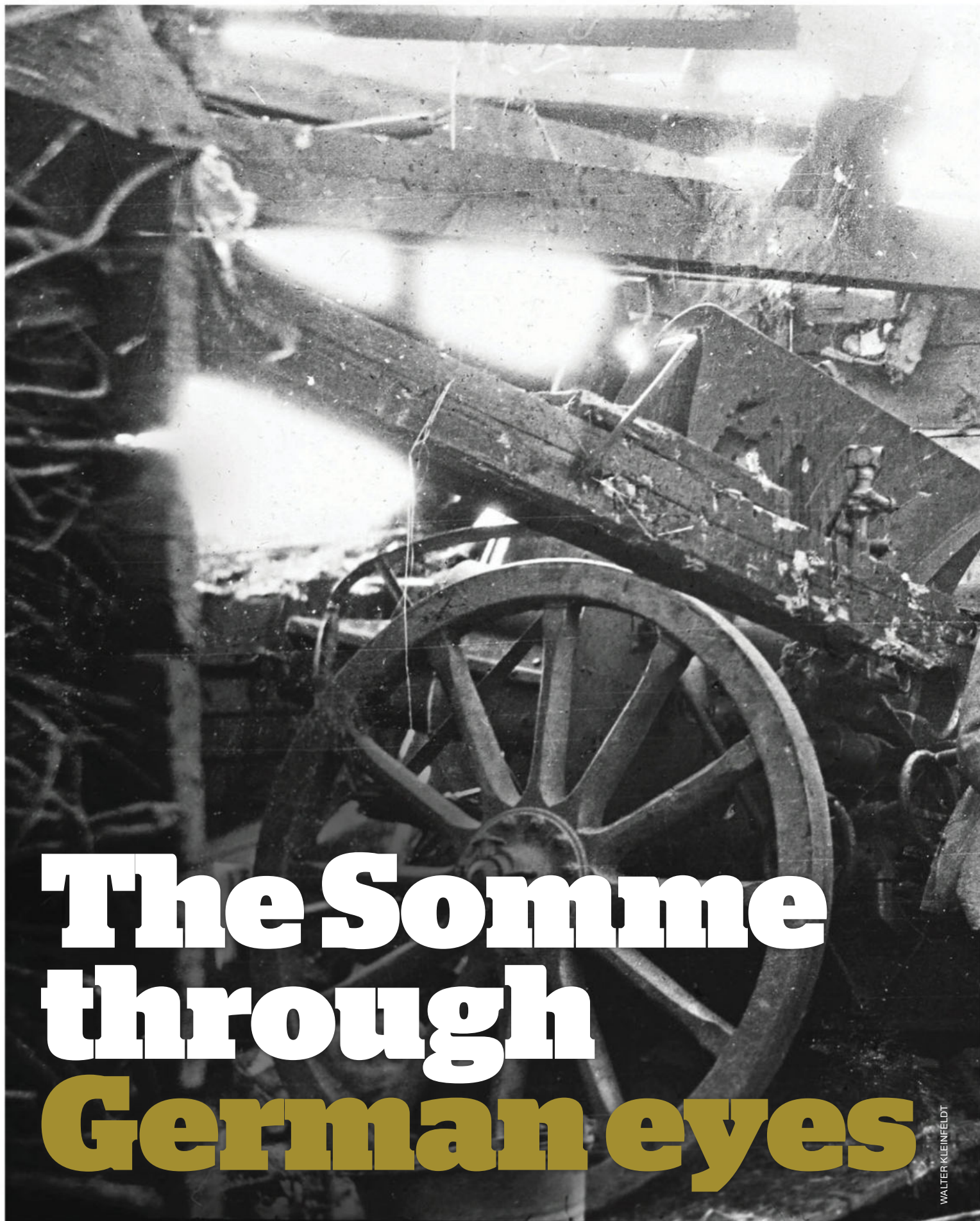
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The Somme through German eyes

WALTER KLEINFELDT

While the British Army was bleeding on the fields of France, its outgunned opponents were also suffering a terrible fate. **Alexander Watson** tells the German story of the battle



Shell damage

This photograph, taken by Walter Kleinfeldt, who joined the German army at the age of 16 and fought at the Somme, shows the aftermath of a direct hit on a German howitzer position near Pozzières on 1 July 1916

In the early hours of 24 June 1916, British and French guns lit up the German defences on the Somme front. To Sergeant Karl Eisler, stationed at an observation post belonging to Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 29, the cacophony that filled the air – “a howling and hissing, a growling, a splintering and crashing” – was “uncannily terror-inducing”. As shells slammed into the ground nearby, the post shook and thick fountains of brick dust obscured his view. This was the frightening opening of an unprecedented seven-day bombardment and a four-and-a-half-month gruelling battle that would, as Eisler put it, demand from German troops “almost superhuman effort and the mobilisation of all psychological strength”.

The Anglo-French Somme offensive, usually portrayed as an inevitable disappointment for the attackers, appeared from the German defenders’ perspective as a near brush with defeat. Planned as the final blow in an Allied strategy to win the war through massive co-ordinated pressure on all fronts, the battle came at an extraordinarily difficult time for Germany.

The German army had since February been heavily committed to its own vain campaign to bleed the French dry at Verdun. At the start of June, the Russian Brusilov Offensive had smashed its Austro-Hungarian ally at Lutsk (today in western Ukraine), necessitating the hurried transfer of 13 German divisions, five of them from the western front.

Other enemies were circling. Romania was hostile and would declare war in August. The Italians were preparing their sixth attack on the Isonzo river. Further pressure was exerted by a British naval blockade, which ruthlessly squeezed Germany’s supplies of war raw materials and food. Rations at home that year fell to 1,336 calories per day, little more than half of adults’ recommended nourishment.

Earth-shattering

The Germans were the underdogs on the Somme. Their enemies’ manpower and material superiority was simply staggering. At the outset of the offensive, 29 British and French confronted just seven German infantry divisions. The attackers had total control of the air. In artillery, this war’s most important weapon, they had a (literally) earth-shattering advantage: 393 British and French heavy guns faced a paltry 18 German, and the 933 medium and 1,655 light artillery pieces of the attackers were three and four times as numerous as the enemy’s guns.

The offensive’s seven-day opening bombardment rained 2.5 million shells on the defence and set the tone for the rest of the battle, impressing upon all present the attackers’ absolute material dominance

in a new, ghastly form of industrial combat.

The Germans on the Somme did have some qualitative edge over their opponents, but this was limited; they were certainly not the invincible 'professional' force of popular legend. In the south of the battlefield, the 11 French divisions participating in the initial attack were, in training, equipment and experience, the equal of their enemy.

The British force in the north was less well prepared. Britain's army had undergone a breakneck expansion from a tiny professional force at the war's outbreak to a mass army of 1.23 million soldiers in France and Belgium, and this had brought command challenges and inevitable deskilling. Even so, German intelligence fretted before the offensive at how quickly this enemy had learned to co-ordinate infantry, artillery, trench mortars and aircraft. By the summer of 1916, British units had spent at least six months on the western front and were battle-hardened. The troops were highly motivated and optimistic about the coming push to win the war.

Dead and wounded

Far from being invincible, the German army that fought on the Somme had many problems. Certainly, it had learned valuable lessons during the past two years, but the bitter fighting had also taken a toll. Staff officers remained highly competent, but professional leadership at the lower levels had suffered terribly. One in every six career officers were dead and many more wounded already before the bloodletting at Verdun.

Wartime expansion had also diluted the army's professional cadres. The Somme front was mostly garrisoned by reserve divisions raised at the war's outbreak, which had never possessed many career officers. There was nothing 'professional' about these units: the men were citizen soldiers ripped from their civilian lives by the world crisis. They were motivated by the desire to protect their homes and families from invasion, a necessity underlined by the devastation surrounding them. As one of these soldiers remarked in his diary: "We can be pleased not to have the enemy in our own land!"

The defenders on the Somme underwent a terrible ordeal. The British and French attempted at the battle's outset to break through on a 25-mile-wide front; the British commander General Sir Douglas Haig wanted to carry at least the German first and second lines and had his eye on more distant objectives.

The initial bombardment caused the Germans remarkably few casualties: just 2,478 killed and 4,478 wounded. Haig's over-ambition had resulted in it being insufficiently concentrated, and faulty shells



Firepower A digitally coloured image shows a depot supplying Allied artillery during the battle of the Somme. Allied guns fired 2.5 million shells in the week before 1 July 1916



Final moments A photograph taken by Walter Kleinfeldt shows a German medic kneeling beside a dying colleague. German forces on the Somme lost nearly 6 per cent of their strength every week

and deep German dugouts further reduced its lethality. Nonetheless, the prolonged barrage still placed German defenders under colossal psychological strain. Fearful rumours circulated the shelters that the enemy intended to exterminate everyone with artillery alone. German infantry units reported at the end of June that their men "all had just one hope: let the endless shelling finally stop and the enemy attack".

On 1 July – not, as usually misremembered, the first but the eighth day of the Somme battle – at 8.30am German time, 55,000 Allied assault troops at last clambered over their parapets and advanced towards the battered German defences. A British wireless

message hinting at imminent attack had been intercepted four hours earlier, and the Germans were ready. Despite their positions being beaten with intense shellfire and rocked by several almighty explosions from subterranean mines, the soldiers quickly climbed their dugout stairs, manned their positions and called down their own protective barrage.

In the north of the battlefield, British attackers were stopped dead. However, further south and against the French a crisis developed. A division collapsed, the front line was lost and the Germans held their second line only thanks to a timely commitment of reserves. Still, the tremendous endurance of the German defenders had not been in vain. For

around 13,000 casualties, they had inflicted five times their losses on the vastly superior enemy and had disrupted its war-winning offensive.

The successes of 1 July brought no rejoicing in the German Command. The army on the Somme steeled itself for renewed assault. On 3 July, its commander, General von Below, grimly ordered his troops to wage a bitter defence: "On the victory of Second Army on the Somme hangs the outcome of the war. The battle must be won by us... For now, everything depends on holding onto our current positions at all costs and on improving them with small counter-attacks. I forbid the voluntary evacuation of positions... Only over corpses may the enemy find his way forward."

Hail of shellfire

The battle now became a relentless attritional struggle. The British and French deployed unmatched resources to break the Germans. By mid-August, they had sent 106 divisions through the inferno, against 57½ German. The hail of shellfire also continued uninterrupted, with the British firing off 19 million shells during the offensive. The fighting was grievously bloody. German forces on the Somme lost nearly 6 per cent of their strength *every week*. Infantry regiments frequently lost one third of their soldiers in action.

Yet it was above all the psychological strain that the battle placed on combatants that set it apart. The psychiatric casualty rate among the troops opposite the British was sky high – more than double the usual rate in the western field army. The constant heavy artillery fire especially unnerved the men. By the autumn, growing numbers were reporting sick, self-inflicted wounds were multiplying and soldiers were showing a greater propensity to surrender.

Nonetheless, the Germans held. As von Below had ordered, every position was contested, often by small groups of soldiers operating out of shell holes. A vivid taste of their ordeal and the desperate heroism of the outnumbered German infantry was left by Second Lieutenant Ernst Klasen, a company commander in Grenadier Regiment 12. In late July he fought at Delville Wood, a key position where the front shifted direction from west to south. This blood-soaked place was nicknamed 'Devil's Wood' by British troops, but the wordplay does not work in German; to Klasen, it was simply 'hell'. He had marched in the hectic advance of August 1914, fought in the brutal trench warfare of 1915, and survived the opening assault on Verdun, where he had seen "much horrific" that had temporarily left his "nerves ... somewhat broken". But his five days and

Following constant shellfire, growing numbers of troops were reporting sick, and self-inflicted wounds were multiplying



Unholy war Corpses surround a crucifix following a skirmish in 1917. In the aftermath of the Somme, the German army continued to grow but its morale was badly shaken

nights on the Somme, he told his family, "were the worst days of the whole war".

To reach their front line, Klasen and his soldiers had to leap from shell hole to shell hole. The air, he wrote, had been "full of iron". On their arrival, the enemy bombarded and assaulted them. Klasen's unit spent the next days under constant "murderous drumfire" from heavy artillery, followed by repeated infantry attacks. Just once could ration carriers get through with food and drink. What provisions the men had, they shared: "On such occasions," remarked Klasen, "one meets true comradeship."

The last day was the worst. A three-hour barrage of huge violence collapsed their trenches, and nearly everyone in the company was buried or lightly wounded. Klasen was hit twice by shell fragments, which luckily only tore his uniform and bruised his skin. Suddenly the fire stopped and British troops stormed forwards. The Germans opened up with rifles and machine guns, but the attackers were finally thrown back only after a savage fight with hand grenades.

The position held but at frightful cost. Only Klasen, who won an Iron Cross 1st

Class, and two others among his battalion's officers, returned unscathed. As company commander, his duties when he reached the rest areas included writing condolence letters to the families of 130 dead, wounded and missing men.

The Somme offensive was a failure, in part because of British and French command errors but also thanks to the courage and astonishing endurance of German troops such as Klasen. The Germans inflicted 624,000 casualties on the attackers, against their own loss of half a million men, and during the battle retreated a mere six miles on a 20-mile front. No decisive attritional blow was inflicted on German manpower; indeed, the army continued to expand, reaching peak strength a year *after* the start of the battle.

In morale terms, the battle's impact was more severe. German troops were shaken by the colossal artillery fire and, for the first time, began to doubt their ability to win the war. Desertions would jump in 1917. Yet it was the French army, not the Germans, that suffered the greatest disciplinary problems in the battle's aftermath.

For the Germans, the Somme's legacy was nonetheless fateful. Their High Command was deeply shocked by the extent of the Allies' material advantage, and reacted with a new, more ruthless war drive. This included pressing for unrestricted submarine warfare, the measure that provoked the US to declare hostilities in April 1917.

Ominously, the Somme also cemented German faith in the primacy of will over material. The army was reorganised in order to institutionalise the resilience and combat tactics of the small groups of infantry that had fought the British and French to a standstill in 1916. Over the longer term, this belief's impact was even more profound and tragic. The emotive image of the unswerving front fighter hardened on the Somme and carrying all before him would be used to justify the army command's determination to fight on against the world in 1917–18. Two decades later, it would also be remobilised by the Nazis to support their murderous ambitions for the revival of German power. **H**

Alexander Watson is professor of history at Goldsmiths, University of London and a winner of the Wolfson History Prize. He will be discussing the First World War at *BBC History Magazine's* History Weekend – see historyweekend.com

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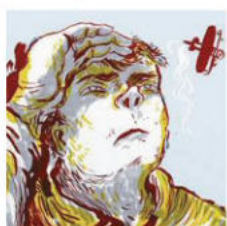
► **Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914–1918** by Alexander Watson (Allen Lane, 2014)

OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

Fighting on the front line

In part 26 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** takes us to July 1916, when pilots in the Royal Flying Corps discovered that the Germans were not the only enemy, and ground forces learnt that surviving on the western front was a deadly serious game of duck and cover. Peter will be tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



James McCudden

Born in 1895, James joined the Royal Flying Corps as an air mechanic in 1913. By December 1915, he had become a regular observer/gunner for several pilots with 3 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps.

On 8 July Sergeant James McCudden was posted to 20 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps at Clairmarais. He would be piloting the FE2d, a powerful two-seater deployed in a multi-functional role as a fighter. On 20 July he took off with a patrol of five FE2ds and learnt that Germans were not the only danger to an aviator.

“We should have been somewhere over Lille, but as my observer and I could not see the ground, it was difficult to say. Occasionally, we would see villages so knew we were over unfamiliar country. We flew west, and then through a gap in the mist I saw what I mistook to be the town of Bailleul. As the formation had now dissolved, I decided to get under the mist and follow a main road to Clairmarais. When I got down to 2,000 feet I saw that the mist was

decidedly low, and I continued down to 600 feet. I went further down in an endeavour to get underneath the mist, but then just in front of me loomed a large row of trees, such as always border the routes nationales [trunk roads] of France.

I at once switched on, zoomed over the trees, and trusted that the country was clear in front. Fortunately, it was, and I made some pretence of landing, stopping in the back garden of a small farmhouse, just in time to bid “Bonjour, M’sieur!” to the agitated farmers. The machine was undamaged so all we could do was wait for the mist to clear.

They were miles off course, but had been fortunate. Of the five aircraft on McCudden’s patrol three others had crashed causing four serious injuries and two fatalities. War in the air was dangerous.



George Ashurst

George, 21, of the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers had been gassed in Ypres and served in Gallipoli. At the end of June he was ready to go over the top on the first day of the battle of the Somme.

The first day of July 1916 was a terrible day for the British Army. The 1st Lancashire Fusiliers, so proud of their service at Gallipoli in 1915, discovered the reality of war on the western front. At 07.30am they walked into a hell of interlocked machine gun fire and concentrated shellfire. This was modern war at its most fiendish.

“It’s time to go over. I’m just stepping on top and there was a corporal lying there, gone – all blown away, I think he’d been hit by a whiz-bang. He looks up at me as I pass him, “Go

on corporal, get the bastards!” There were bullets everywhere. Run – that was the only thing in my mind. Run and dodge. Expecting at any second to feel a bullet hit me. I was zig-zagging, holding my head down so a bullet would hit my tin hat. I seemed to be dodging in



"It's time to go over the top. There were bullets everywhere. Run – that was the only thing on my mind. Run and dodge"

between them – I must have been to get there! There was gun smoke. You could hear when a bullet hit somebody, you could hear it hit him! Hear him groan and go down. It was mainly machine guns that cut us up. I was thinking: "I've got to get forward that's all!" I dived into a sunken road.

The German trenches were still a long way ahead of them. After a brief period of reorganisation, they were ready to try again. But the fire pouring into them was still intense and it was impossible.

“Colonel Magniac said: “Every fit man, come with me – over the top again!” He went over, I ran up the slope, whether a lot more did I don't know. I ran on and there was nobody with me, so I got a bit frightened then. When I came across this shell hole I dropped

in it. I could lie down and look back over our lines. I could see our wounded, they would get up and try to go on and then they'd drop, they'd been shot again. I'm lying there. I had a drink out of my water bottle. Looking back, I noticed the Royal Fusiliers on the left were running back to their trenches.

I didn't know what they were doing, but I thought, “Jerry's counter-attacking, what about me, if he comes over the top here, I'm for it all right, there's nothing for me!” So I made my mind up that I'd got to move and move very quick. I got up and dashed down this slope again and dived into the sunken road once more. Safe – they'd missed again!

In this sector of the Somme front, the story was one of failure as the attack collapsed in no man's land. The Lancashire Fusiliers clung on to

the sunken road for a while but their position was hopeless. That night they left just a token force to hold it as an outpost. Among them was George Ashurst.

“The thing quietened down, we were practically sleeping all night. As dawn came I was against this bit of a barrier we'd built up at the bottom end and I hear some voices on the other side. I stand up and there's three Jerries about 100 yards away stood in a ditch! I took my rifle and I fired at the middle one, but whether I hit him or not I don't know. The officer came down to see what the trouble was. He said: “Ooooh, Jerry will let us bloody well have it!” He was right. He started with minenwerfers. Dropping them here and there, he dropped one right on the body of men in the middle of the road, killed half of them and wounded the other half.

The sunken road was evacuated and George Ashurst and his comrades were soon back in the front line, where they had started the previous day.



Thomas Louch

Thomas Louch was born in 1894 in Geraldton, Australia. He served with the 11th (Western Australia) Battalion. In 1915 he was wounded at Gallipoli.

When he moved from Egypt to the western front, Lieutenant Thomas Louch was appointed intelligence officer with the Australian 51st Infantry Battalion.

“I was in charge of the scout section of eight men. Out of the line our duties were to reconnoitre the routes of proposed marches and furnish guides if necessary, to arrange billeting, and on tactical exercises to lay tapes square on to the objective, on which the troops deployed. It was necessary to ensure that in an attack the troops started off in the right direction. In the line our duties were multifarious. One task was to count the enemy shells, and note where they fell. Germans were methodical and usually shelled the same areas. Through studying their habits beforehand, it was possible to save casualties by avoiding the hot spots behind the line. II

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

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ALAMY



A soldier brings in a wounded man of the 29th Division after the assault at Beaumont-Hamel on 1 July 1916

Nuclear fall-out

In 1945, the USSR was an ally of the west in the fight against Nazi Germany. But a mere 17 years later the two sides stood poised to obliterate each other in a nuclear apocalypse.

David Reynolds describes how a relationship turned ugly

Accompanies a new BBC Radio 4 series, *Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze*



The USSR showcases its military might at the 1961 annual May Day parade in Red Square, Moscow. Khrushchev's deployment of 36 of these R-12 medium-range thermonuclear missiles to Cuba precipitated 1962's Cuban missile crisis

We call it the Cold War, but in October 1962 the world seemed about to incinerate. The Soviet decision to install nuclear missiles in Cuba triggered a crisis with the United States that threatened a global holocaust.

How had it come to this? Two decades earlier, the USA and the USSR had been allies in the defeat of Nazi Germany. In March 1943, *Life* magazine lauded the Russians as “one hell of a people” who “look like Americans, dress like Americans and think like Americans”. As for the NKVD (Stalin’s dreaded secret police), *Life* declared it was “similar to the FBI”.

In reality, though, the wartime alliance had been a marriage of convenience. The “main bond of the victors”, admitted Winston Churchill, had been “their common hate” towards Hitler’s Reich, but this no longer held them together after 1945. Three crunch issues lay at the heart of the ensuing Cold War: ideology, geopolitics and nuclear weapons.

Ideologically, America’s mantra was ‘liberty’ – ‘free enterprise’, limited government and democratic localism. Socialism and commu-

nism were minority movements in the USA, easily stigmatised as ‘un-American’.

In the USSR, Marxist-Leninist ideology predicted the imminent crisis of imperialist capitalism, leading to a dictatorship of the proletariat – of which the Soviet communist party constituted the vanguard. Although playing down the rhetoric of world revolution by the 1940s, Josef Stalin remained keen to accelerate the process of historical change. The chaos caused by the Second World War offered plenty of opportunities.

In fact, the conflict transformed the geopolitical position of both countries, sucking them into power vacuums created by the defeat of the Axis powers. These in turn became flashpoints of the new Cold War – above all, in Germany, China and Korea.

The USA and the USSR occupied Germany to defeat Hitler and then stayed to shape the peace. The Soviets had lost perhaps 27 million people from 1941–45, around one-seventh of their population, and were now determined to prevent the revival of German military power. But America and Britain were equally determined to get the country on its feet again and off their backs. In 1948, the US, Britain



The Cold War

and France cut through the diplomatic deadlock and began to create a West German state out of their zones of occupation. They also introduced a new currency, the Deutschmark, which almost overnight got goods into the shops. Stalin hit back by blockading West Berlin, which the western allies could only reach through Soviet-occupied eastern Germany.

President Harry Truman had no doubt that remaining in Berlin had become “a symbol of the American intent” in Europe. And so, in tandem with the RAF, the US Air Force mounted a round-the-clock airlift of food and fuel into the beleaguered city in the winter of 1948–49. At its peak, Berlin was handling more air traffic than New York.

Berlin divided

The ‘air-bridge’ not only broke Stalin’s blockade, it also transformed West German attitudes to the Americans and British. Former enemies were now becoming allies, while the wartime allies were turning into adversaries. The blockade also widened the rift between the USSR and the other three victor powers. In April 1949, the US signed the North Atlantic Treaty with Canada and 10 European states, led by Britain and France. Stalin’s gamble in Berlin had boomeranged, drawing the west into an unprecedented transatlantic alliance.

Yet the global ‘correlation of forces’, as the Soviets called it, shifted again the following year. In October 1949, China’s three decades of civil war ended in total victory for Mao Zedong and the communists. The world’s most populous country had gone ‘red’ – arousing alarm and recrimination in America.

An even greater shock followed in Korea. In 1945, Japanese forces had surrendered to the Soviets in the north and the US in the south. As in Germany, neither superpower was willing to withdraw. But their clients were determined to unify the country, and in June 1950 Stalin gave the green light to the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung to attack the south, thinking the west would not react. This was Stalin’s second gross miscalculation in two years: as with Berlin, Truman saw Korea as a vital symbol of US will and power. He judged that “communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese had acted 10, 15, 20 years earlier”. The lessons of appeasement seemed clear: “If this was allowed to go unchallenged, it would mean a third world war.”

Truman committed US forces to Korea, enlisting the support of key allies, including Britain. The Korean War proved a yo-yo affair, with the North Koreans initially driving deep into the south before US counter-attacks pushed them back almost to the Chinese border. They in turn provoked China to enter the war. Fighting finally stabilised around the

How friends became foes...



April 1945: Soviet and American troops share a drink during their historic meeting at the river Elbe. The two nations were united by “their common hate” for Nazi Germany

Three crunch issues lay at the heart of the Cold War: ideology, geopolitics and nuclear weapons



1949: A poster shows a family under the red flag of Mao Zedong’s newly established People’s Republic of China



GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/PA IMAGES



1950: British and South Korean officers discuss enemy positions on the Nakdong river during the Korean War. This was the conflict in which the Cold War turned hot



1963: A poster lauds the USSR's triumphs in the space race. These included launching a man-made satellite before the Americans



April 1961: Fidel Castro pictured after the CIA-sponsored attempt to overthrow him at the Bay of Pigs. Soon the two superpowers would be "eyeball to eyeball"

38th parallel, which became the basis of an armistice in 1953. This agreement remains in force today in a country that remains divided. Korea was where the Cold War turned hot: the Americans lost 33,000; the Chinese perhaps half a million, including one of Mao's sons; and the overall Korean death toll was maybe 2.5 million, a 10th of the population.

During the 1950s, other power vacuums opened up as decolonisation accelerated. Although the Japanese surrender in 1945 allowed the Europeans to recover most of their Asian domains, the days of empire were now numbered. The British conceded independence to India and Burma two years later, the Dutch gave up the East Indies (Indonesia) and France failed in its 1946–54 struggle to retain Indochina. Unwilling to see the whole region go communist, successive US presidents got sucked into a 'quagmire' war in Vietnam that eventually proved to be America's greatest humiliation of the whole Cold War.

Hitherto the champion of liberty against the imperial powers, by the 1950s the US had to decide whether colonialism or communism was more distasteful and dangerous. Fearful of the growing reach of the left, Washington concluded that it was better to prop up colonial regimes and new post-colonial clients, resulting in US interventions in places like Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954.

Atomic escalation

It was also during the 1950s that the nuclear arms race – the third hallmark of the early Cold War – became truly existential, with action and reaction its perpetual dynamic. In 1945, the explosion of two American atomic bombs on Japan had helped end the Asian war, but Stalin immediately made an A-bomb his top priority; in August 1949 the USSR successfully tested its first atomic device. Their atomic monopoly at an end, the Americans went all-out for a hydrogen bomb in 1952 – and the Soviets matched them in 1953.

The race then was to upgrade their 'delivery systems' from the era of air power into the missile age. This time the Soviets beat the Americans. Their launch of a man-made satellite, Sputnik, in November 1957 was both a technological humiliation for the USA and also a sign that the USSR had a sufficiently powerful rocket to launch a nuclear missile all the way to America. Eisenhower's administration hastily accelerated its own missile programme and implemented a major scheme of civil defence.

Ideology, geopolitics and the bomb all fused together in the crisis over Cuba. Fidel Castro had seized power on the island in 1959, toppling a corrupt regime that was an American economic colony in all but name. Although Castro was not initially a Marxist, Washington's reaction to his reforms drove

him into the arms of Moscow. John F Kennedy inherited a half-baked CIA plan to topple Castro, using Cuban exiles in the US to avoid implicating the White House. But the 'Bay of Pigs' operation in April 1961 proved a fiasco – leaving the president's macho brother Bobby fuming that JFK would now be "regarded as a paper tiger by the Russians".

The competition deepened when Nikita Khrushchev, the feisty Soviet leader, got the better of Kennedy at a bruising summit in Vienna in June 1961. Pumped up by success, he introduced medium-range nuclear missiles into Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

Unlike Stalin over Berlin in 1948, Kennedy was in a position to enforce a blockade of Cuba – controlling the surrounding air space and waters and, above all, enjoying huge superiority in nuclear arsenals if it came to all-out war. So Khrushchev decided to pull his missiles out of Cuba. But it had been a close-run thing. As secretary of state Dean Rusk put it, the two superpowers had been "eyeball to eyeball" and in the end it was the Soviets who "blinked".

On 26 June 1963, Kennedy, now secure in his presidency, spoke in West Berlin. Two summers before, the Soviets and their East German allies had erected a wall to stop the flood of east Germans, mostly young, fit and educated, going west in search of freedom and prosperity. The wall ended the brain drain, but it proved a propaganda own-goal.

Standing before a cheering crowd outside West Berlin's city hall, Kennedy admitted that "freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect". But, he added, "we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in". To those who claimed not to understand what was at stake "between the free world and the communist world" the president issued this simple challenge: "Let them come to Berlin."

As we now know, the Cold War still had a quarter-century to run, with many twists and turns. But that summer's day in Berlin would define the rest of the struggle. **H**

David Reynolds is professor of international history at Cambridge. You can hear him at *BBC History Magazine's History Weekend* in Winchester this October – see historyweekend.com. He and Kristina Spohr will be discussing their new book on the Cold War in our October issue

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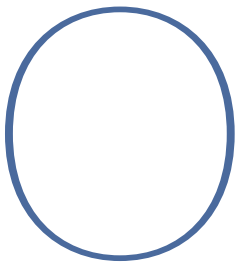
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Protestant hero

A c1683 portrait of the Duke of Monmouth. His "dashing good looks and reputation for bravery made him immensely popular", says Anna Keay, but his 1685 rebellion against James II was to end in disaster

THE RIGHTEOUS ROYAL REBEL

Man of the people or power-hungry opportunist? The Duke of Monmouth's bid for the crown perished on the Somerset Levels in 1685 – and, with it, his reputation. But, says **Anna Keay**, it's time to revise our ideas about the illegitimate son of Charles II



n a warm summer's evening in June 1685 an invasion army of just 83 landed at Lyme Regis in Dorset. The blue banners that flapped above them as they marched down

Lyme's main street read "For God, Freedom and Religion". At their head, impeccable in purple silk and with the garter star glinting on his chest, walked their leader, James, Duke of Monmouth, the 36-year-old illegitimate son of Charles II. An onlooker described "many townsmen and others rejoicing and joining with the enemy crying out: 'A Monmouth! A Monmouth! The Protestant religion!'"

The uprising that began that day was designed to oust the new king, James II and VII, who, as both an authoritarian and a Catholic, was regarded as a threat to English life and liberty. Within barely a week, some 4,000 men had joined up. But despite their popular appeal, luck ran against the rebels at every turn. A twin invasion of Scotland led by the Earl of Argyll, designed to divide the royal army, failed to gather momentum. Those who rose were ordinary people, while the gentry stood cautiously back, waiting to see what would happen.

Four weeks later, having advanced as far as Bristol before beginning to retreat, Monmouth learnt that the royal army was just four miles outside Bridgwater where his force was based. He decided that his only hope now was surprise. In the dead of night, he led his men out of town and across the flood plain of Sedgemoor, towards the enemy camp. The deep drains that traversed the plain were a challenge to navigate in the darkness, but the rebels were drawing close when, suddenly, a soldier let off his pistol. The cracking shot awoke the

unsuspecting royal army. Monmouth and his men tore the last few hundred yards across the meadows to reach a foe that was now on full alert.

Lord Grey, who led the rebel cavalry, struggled to find a route across the final drain and gave up, leaving Monmouth and his eager but utterly amateur infantry to fight alone. While the royal army had guns and weaponry aplenty, the rebels had just three cannons, and many of the soldiers were armed only with straightened scythes. For three hours, through the darkest stretch of the night, the duke directed the attack, dashing back and forwards between the cannons and the line, weapon in hand. As the dawn began to break, it was clear they had no hope. Their cavalry gone, they were outnumbered and completely out-gunned. The battle, the last to be fought on English soil, was lost as the mid-summer sun rose. A week later, the Duke of Monmouth was executed for treason on Tower Hill. The crowd was sombre and dejected: "There was no shouting but many cried."

Despite his immense contemporary popularity, the Duke of Monmouth's

posthumous reputation has been awful. The distinguished 20th-century historian FC Turner called him "worthless and contemptible", wondering with disbelief that he should have "appeared so attractive to his contemporaries". The label on Monmouth's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery calls him "charming, ambitious and unprincipled". Where then, in this great discrepancy, does the truth lie? Was Monmouth a monster his fellow men were too ignorant to see, or have historians got it wrong?

Earning a reputation

The Duke of Monmouth was born in 1649, during his father's exile, and at eight was kidnapped from his mother, Lucy Walter, on his father's instructions. Brought to England in 1662, "a most pretty sparke", he became Charles II's darling. Drenched with honours, made a duke and married to an heiress as he turned 14, he became undoubtedly the most spoiled and debauched teenager of the Restoration age. Samuel Pepys described him as one "who spends his time the most viciously and idly of any man, nor will be fit for anything". Had history stopped then, Monmouth's reputation would have been deserved.

But it did not. In the five years or so from the late 1660s, Monmouth matured from a selfish idler into a man of substance. Two years spent leading the English regiments sent to fight with Louis XIV (against the Dutch in the Franco-Dutch War) were to prove transformational. They gave him real responsibility, away from the licentious Restoration court, causing him to grow up rapidly and dramatically. They also saw him forge a formidable military reputation, not least when, in 1673, with Louis XIV looking on, he led the Anglo-French army to bring down the fortified city of Maastricht. With both the Comte D'Artagnan himself and the

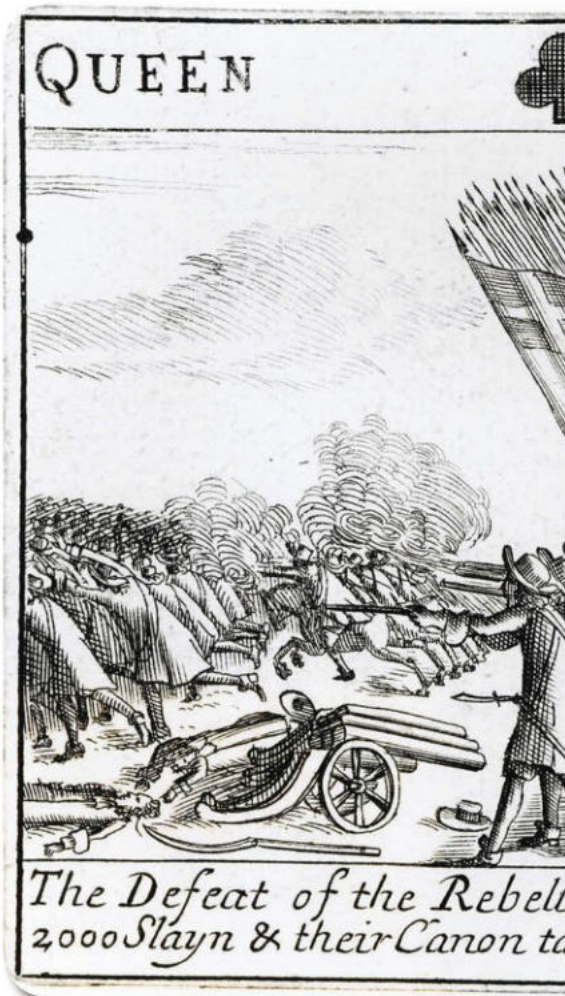
Drenched with honours, made a duke and married to an heiress at 14, he became the most debauched teenager of the Restoration age

Monmouth's rebellion



18 June 1685: Monmouth meets an adoring public
The Queen of Diamonds from a contemporary playing card set commemorating Monmouth's rebellion shows the "maids of Taunton" kneeling before the duke shortly after he'd landed in England

6 July 1685: The rebels are routed
The Queen of Clubs depicts the battle of Sedgemoor, where Monmouth's men were hopelessly outgunned



future Duke of Marlborough fighting under him, the siege made him a military hero.

On his return from the wars, Monmouth became head of the army, a privy councillor and a figure of growing political consequence. It was a fluke of timing that on the very month he led his men to victory at Maastricht, his uncle, James, Duke of York, was forced to resign all his offices, after confirming his conversion to Catholicism. Over the next decade, as fear grew about the dangers posed by York succeeding Charles II, Monmouth emerged as the popular alternative, and – after his father expelled him from court – a member of the political opposition who tried to pass a bill through parliament excluding York from the throne. It was a political drama of which the 1685 invasion would be the last tragic act.

Dearly beloved

Posterity's first charge against Monmouth is one of misplaced ambition: the absurdity of an ill-educated bastard son seeking the throne at all. It's true that there were calls for Monmouth to succeed his father but they didn't come from the duke himself. Charles II treated Monmouth with such affection that the rumours that the duke would be legitimised were widespread while he was barely in

Charles II treated Monmouth with such affection that rumours soon spread that the young prince would be legitimised

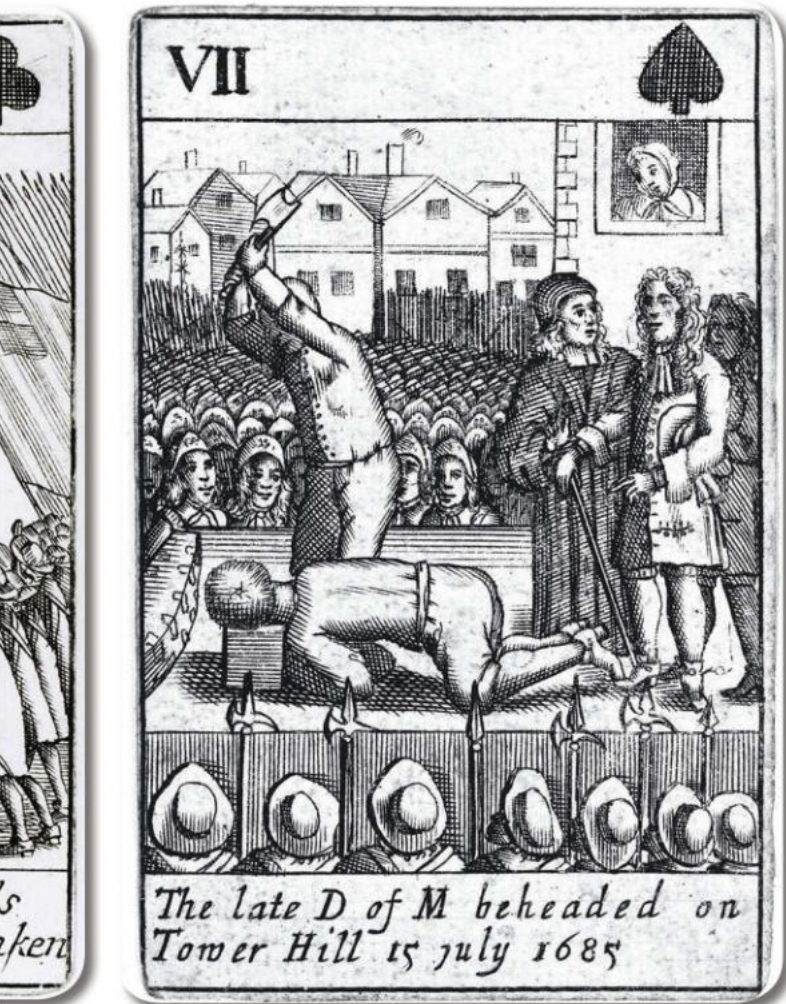


Charles II (above) encouraged rumours that Monmouth would be legitimised by treating his "beloved son" as a 'prince of the blood'

his teens. Charles II encouraged these by calling him "our dearly beloved son", giving him a coat of arms without the baton denoting illegitimacy and allowing him to take the place in court ceremonial of a prince of the blood.

By 1680, Monmouth certainly wished to see his uncle excluded from the succession, but he never actively proposed himself as an alternative. Indeed, even when he invaded England, he declared parliament should decide the succession. It was only when it became clear that the invasion was heading for disaster that he was finally persuaded to put his name forward as king.

The second charge is that Monmouth was a selfish opportunist without political conviction. This also does not bear close inspection. During his army career Monmouth developed an acute sense of honour and justice. He took immense trouble to ensure that right prevailed, taking time to settle endless disputes equitably, lobbying relentlessly for pay to be on time and gaining a reputation for fairness and humanity. When he was sent to put down a Presbyterian uprising in Scotland, he refused to kill the defeated rebels as his father and uncle thought he should, remarking that "he could not kill men in cold blood, that was only for butchers".



15 July 1685: Monmouth is executed on Tower Hill

The Seven of Spades shows the executioner about to chop off the rebel leader's head. "There was no shouting but many cried," wrote one onlooker of the crowd's reaction to Monmouth's death

During the 1670s, the Duke of York had become ever more jealous of his popular nephew and repeatedly blocked his appointment to senior positions. This gave Monmouth ample reason to dislike the uncle to whom he had once been close. But his decision to join the opposition was fuelled by far more than personal animosity. In fact, it was his encounter with the government's harsh treatment of Scottish Presbyterians in the late 1670s that convinced him that the authoritarian York posed a real danger to English political and religious liberty. York resented any resistance to royal authority, being "bred with high notions of the kingly authority, and laid it down for a maxim that all who opposed the king were rebels in their hearts". He showed his true colours when he told William of Orange the following year that he and Charles intended to dispense with parliaments altogether.

When Monmouth spoke in support of the bill to exclude his uncle from the succession in 1680, he was not acting simply out of personal enmity to one who had relentlessly blocked his progress but also out of personal conviction that English freedoms were under threat. A man of no moral compass he was not.

The fierce political dichotomy between

those who wished to exclude York, and those who did not, gave rise to political 'parties' for the first time: the 'Whigs' for exclusion; the 'Tories' against. At the forefront of the Whigs was the brilliant Earl of Shaftesbury, Monmouth's political colleague, who has been viewed as his puppet master. But in fact, the duke and Shaftesbury often disagreed, leading in the end to their parting company definitively.

A shame and a sin

The final charge against Monmouth relates to his capitulation before James II on the day before his execution, when he pleaded for his life and claimed to have been misled into invading. That any human, facing an imminent and violent death, might bargain for survival is hardly surprising. (Thomas Cranmer enthusiastically recanted his Protestantism in the days before being burned by Mary Tudor, for which history has forgiven him.) And there was truth in Monmouth's protests. When he heard of his father's death, he had been out of politics for two years and declared he would have no part in any uprising. It was only when the radical Whigs subjected him to huge emotional pressure – telling him "it would be a shame and a sin before God not to do it" – before lying about

The life of Monmouth

April 1649

Three months after the execution of Charles I, **an illegitimate son is born** to the 18-year-old Charles II in Rotterdam. He is named James.

1658

The young James is **kidnapped from his mother**, Lucy Walter (right), on Charles II's orders.



July 1662

James is **brought to England** by his grandmother, Queen Henrietta Maria. His father gives him a rapturous welcome.

April 1663



James (left) is **made Duke of Monmouth and married** to Anna, Countess of Buccleuch. The groom is 14 and the bride 12.

June 1673

Louis XIV's army **besieges the stronghold of Maastricht**. Monmouth leads the attack, fighting with the Comte D'Artagnan, and successfully takes the city.

September 1679

Charles II **expels Monmouth from court**, as popular support for him to replace James, Duke of York as the king's successor reaches fever pitch.

Autumn 1681

A **bill to exclude the Duke of York from the throne** is passed in the Commons. Monmouth speaks in its favour in the Lords, but it is defeated.

July 1683

Monmouth is **implicated in a plot for an armed rising** against Charles II and is given harbour at the Hague by his cousin William of Orange (right).




June 1685

Monmouth lands at Lyme Regis. He raises an army of 4,000, but **they are defeated at the battle of Sedgemoor**.

November 1688

William of Orange lands at Torbay. James II flees after a catastrophic reign, and the Bill of Rights heralds the dawn of constitutional monarchy.

Monmouth's rebellion



The second coming
William of Orange lands at Brixham in November 1688. Having learned the lessons of Monmouth's failed uprising, William brought 20,000 men, as opposed to Monmouth's 83. It took him just six weeks to oust James II

the level of support for an invasion, that he had eventually agreed.

Peeling back the layers, Monmouth emerges as a different figure. He was adored by the crowds in London and on the Whig campaign tours he made of the North West and South West. In the face of a wildly unpopular royal heir, he was the Protestant son of the king whose dashing good looks and reputation for bravery made him immensely appealing.

He also had huge personal charm. Ballads were printed in his name, popular prints churned out, and tales told of his exploits. When he visited Chester, he stood as godfather of the mayor's baby daughter, participated in horse and foot races and – when he won – presented his prize to his new goddaughter. Every politician who ever kissed a baby learned a lesson from the Duke of Monmouth. All of this was to be hugely important, for this was the age in which popular participation in English electoral politics truly began.

English rising

Just three years after his failed invasion, Monmouth's cousin and close friend William of Orange followed suit. In contrast to Monmouth's 83 men and three vessels, William landed with 20,000 men in 500 ships. Within six weeks he had taken the kingdom. That he was able to do so owed a great deal to the Duke of Monmouth. He had shown the pitfalls of invading: the need not to rely on Englishmen rising and the importance of the support of the ruling elite – causing William to secure his 'invitation' to invade. And it was

This was the age in which popular participation in English electoral politics truly began. Every politician who ever kissed a baby learned a lesson from Monmouth



Sir Peter Lely's portrait of Monmouth, who made intervening in the royal succession not just palatable, but popular among ordinary people

no coincidence that William chose Monmouth's own West Country heartland for his landing place. Above all, Monmouth had made intervening in the royal succession not just palatable but popular among ordinary people.

After his death, it was in no one's interests – neither the dejected Jacobites nor the jubilant Williamites – to mourn the fallen Monmouth. He lived on, though, in the memory of those who had followed him – among them the husbandman John Bragg, who believed “Munmouth was noe more dead than he was and that we should see other of his doings here”.

William's wife, Queen Mary II of England, who had skated hand in hand with the duke just weeks before his invasion, commissioned a history that described the cousin she loved. Monmouth, to her, was “brave, generous, affable, and extremely handsome, constant in his friendships, just to his word and an utter enemy to all sorts of cruelty”. His invasion was not an act of preposterous vainglory, but was driven by motives that “were noble and chiefly aim'd at the good of his country”. ■

Dr Anna Keay is director of the Landmark Trust. She will be discussing the Duke of Monmouth as part of *BBC History Magazine's* History Weekends in both Winchester and York this autumn – see historyweekend.com

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BOOK

► **The Last Royal Rebel: The Life and Death of James, Duke of Monmouth** by Anna Keay (Bloomsbury, 2016)

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY



Æthelstan presents a book to St Cuthbert in a manuscript of the Venerable Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*. Within a few years of his coronation, Vikings, Welsh, Northumbrians and Scots would acknowledge the Wessex ruler as their overlord

THE ASTONISHING ÆTHELSTAN

The Anglo-Saxon king's achievement of uniting England ranks
as the most momentous in all of British history

By Tom Holland

Early in the 12th century, a tomb in the abbey of Malmesbury was briefly opened. A monk named William took the chance to inspect the skeleton that lay inside it. The dead man, so he reported, had been of average height and slender build. Not everything in the coffin, though, was bones. Traces of hair

were still to be seen – and these too the monk studied attentively. “It had been,” so he recorded later, “blonde in colour, and beautifully twisted into golden braids.” William of Malmesbury had good reason to take an interest in such details. Sent to the abbey as a child, he had grown up with a justifiable pride in its history. More than anyone, he appreciated the significance of the man whose braided hair he had so carefully noted.

Æthelstan, a king who over the course of his reign had brought the whole of Britain to acknowledge him as overlord, had been laid to rest in Malmesbury some two centuries before, in 939. During his lifetime, he had been a formidably generous patron of the abbey. Of all the many shrines to which he had been devoted, “he had honoured none as more holy than Malmesbury”. It was thanks to his generosity that it could boast a particularly awesome relic: a fragment of the True Cross. The monks’ devotion to their long-dead patron was only to be expected.

William’s horizons, though, were far from bound by the limits of his monastery. Fascinated by the past since a child, it was his ambition to write a comprehensive history of England. That one of his parents was actually a Norman did not in any way inhibit him from declaring his motivation to be “love of my country”. The sheer antiquity of the English state, far from being despised by its conquerors, tended instead to be both prized and respected by them – for it added lustre to their rule. A Norman anointed as ‘King of the English’, no matter that his native tongue was French, ruled as the heir of those same kings who had first, long before the slaughter at Hastings, fashioned England and brought it into being.

William, whose sophistication as a historian was profound, was in no doubt as to the scale of what they had achieved. It was not only their victories in war that had laid the foundations of the English state but their concern for justice and their sponsorship of learning. Generous a patron of Malmesbury though Æthelstan had been, there were reasons far more telling why William should portray him as the greatest of England’s kings. “The opinion of the English that he governed them with a greater concern for law and for education than anyone else in their history is a valid one.”

By the time that William wrote this, ‘Englalande’ had been a term in common use for a century, and its lineaments as a kingdom had come to be taken widely for granted. It was evident as well that the roots of this precociously unitary state, with its single currency, its common language and its intimidating monarchy, reached back in turn a further century – and that the first man who could legitimately be reckoned its king was Æthelstan. “Through God’s grace he ruled all of England alone which before him many kings held among themselves.”

The achievement, though, had not been his alone. The kingdom of the English had been fashioned over the course of three generations and in the teeth of a desperate struggle for survival against the Vikings. Over the course of the ninth century, a succession of English-speaking kingdoms had been first stripped bare and then dismembered: Northumbria, East Anglia, the Midlands realm of Mercia. Only one realm had held out: Wessex. Then, in the winter of 878, its king, Alfred, had been ambushed and sent fleeing into a marsh. The entire future of the English as an independent people had been left hanging by a thread.

Alfred, though, had re-emerged from the marshes, defeated the Vikings and succeeded in stabilising the frontiers of his kingdom. When he died in 899, both Wessex and the western half of Mercia were securely under his rule. Further conquests were to follow. Edward, Alfred’s eldest son and heir as king, had arrived at a momentous conclusion: that ultimately, faced by enemies as predatory and opportunistic as the Vikings, it was only by forcing all of them to submit permanently that Wessex and Mercia would ever be able to enjoy true security. Accordingly, he dug for victory. A great line of fortresses was erected along his frontier with Viking territory.

In constructing these ‘burhs’, Edward was helped by a remarkable woman: his sister, Æthelflæd. Devout, learned and martial in her ambitions, she had been married by Alfred to the most powerful man in Mercia and then, after his death in 911, accepted by the Mercians as their ruler. In 917, brother and sister moved in for the kill. As Edward annexed Viking-held East Anglia, so Æthelflæd received the surren-



England’s “foundress”, Æthelflæd, who helped make Wessex the supreme power south of the Humber

When poets and chroniclers acclaimed Æthelstan as ‘rex totius Britanniae’ – ‘the king of the whole of Britain’ – they were not indulging in idle flattery, but simply stating fact



Æthelstan's tomb in Malmesbury Abbey. In an era of brutal punishments, the king's law codes were remarkably enlightened

der of Derby and Leicester (the latter in 918). By the time she died, on 12 June 918, everywhere south of the Humber had effectively come under Edward's rule. The launchpad had been built for what would prove, the following decade, to be the final and decisive stage in the fashioning of England: the conquest of Northumbria.

This was secured in 927. Æthelstan, Edward's eldest son and Æthelflæd's ward for much of his youth, had been on the throne since 924. He had been crowned as king of both the Saxons of Wessex and the Anglians of Mercia – as king of the Anglo-Saxons. Then, two years later, he marched on the Viking-held city of York and made it his own. Princes in the lands beyond the city, intimidated by the scope of his power, scrambled to acknowledge his authority. Never before had the grasp of a southern king reached so far. Wessex, Mercia and now Northumbria: all the peoples who spoke the conqueror's own language, the whole way to the Firth of Forth, acknowledged Æthelstan as their lord. In mark of this, he adopted a fateful new title, that of ‘Rex Anglorum’: ‘King of the English’.

Æthelstan's horizons, though, were wider still. His ambitions were not content with the rule of the English alone. He aspired to be acknowledged as lord of the entire island: by the inhabitants of the various kingdoms of the Welsh; and by the Welsh-speaking Cumbrians of Strathclyde, whose king, Owain, held sway from the Clyde down to Hadrian's Wall; and by the Scots, who lived beyond the

Forth in the Highland realm of Alba. All had duly been obliged to bow their necks to him. In May 934, when Constantin, king of Scotland, briefly attempted defiance, Æthelstan led an army deep into Alba and put its heartlands to the torch. Constantin was quickly brought to heel. Humbly he acknowledged the invader as his overlord. When poets and chroniclers hailed Æthelstan as ‘rex totius Britanniae’ – ‘the king of the whole of Britain’ – they were not indulging in idle flattery but simply stating fact.

Conquest was not the limit of Æthelstan's feats. The greatest warrior of the age did not scorn to moderate martial prowess with compassion. Like his grandfather, Alfred, whose own law code had been prefaced with praise for “the mercy taught by Christ”, Æthelstan believed himself bound to legislate in a way that ranked as authentically Christian. The obligation on him to maintain the order of his kingdom and ensure the security of his subjects did not prevent him from fretting at the human cost. It was the law in Wessex that even a child as young as 10 might be condemned for theft. Yet Æthelstan, in spelling out the details of what precisely was to constitute a capital offence, made sure to spare from execution all those under the age of 13.

Nevertheless, Æthelstan's conscience remained troubled. Even as

THE HISTORY ESSAY

A Christian king was nothing, in Æthelstan's opinion, if he did not combine greatness and martial prowess with care for the vulnerable



A modern depiction of the battle of Brunanburh, in which Æthelstan sealed his supremacy over the island of Britain

he attempted to stamp out theft and robbery, legislating against them to an almost obsessive degree, anxiety that he might be betrayed by his own laws into savagery still gnawed at him. Lengthy consultations with his counsellors and his bishops duly persuaded him to ameliorate their strictness. "The king thinks it cruel to have such young people put to death, and for such minor offences, as he has learnt is the common practice elsewhere. Therefore, it is the stated opinion both of the king and of those with whom he has discussed the matter that no one should be put to death who is under 15 years of age."

Clemency such as this was the reverse side of the ferocity with which Æthelstan punished betrayals of his lordship. A Christian king was nothing, in his opinion, if he did not combine greatness with care for the vulnerable. In 932, on Christmas Eve, he duly marked the birth of his Saviour in a stable by issuing a charter that imposed a legal obligation upon its recipient to care for the poor. Æthelstan's determination that no one living on his own lands be permitted to starve saw him issue a particularly prescriptive ordinance. The officials responsible for his estates were warned by their master that fines would be levied on those who failed in their duty to the needy and the proceeds donated to charity. "My wish it is that you should always provide the destitute with food."

But in the north trouble was brewing. Constantin, determined still to shake off the yoke of Æthelstan's overlordship, despite his grudging submission in 934; Owain, fearful of what the greatness of the emergent English kingdom on his doorstep might mean for his own much smaller realm; the Vikings, unreconciled to their loss of

York: Æthelstan had underestimated them all. By 937, their alliance was out in the open.

Two centuries later, William of Malmesbury would report that the realisation of his blindness had numbed Æthelstan. Brought the news of the powers ranged against him, he had acted at first as though frozen by the sheer horror of it. As harvests in the north of his kingdom were put to the torch and peasants fled before the onslaught, so the *rex totius Britanniae* had seemed to shrink from acting. "But at length the cries of complaint stirred the king. He knew it insufferable to be branded with the shame of having submitted meekly to barbarian arms." And so, with the weariness of a man who had believed his life's great labour of construction completed, only to find it threatened with utter ruin, he readied himself to fight for the survival of England. "Æðelstan cyning lædde fyrde to Brunanbyrig": "Æthelstan the king led the levy to Brunanburh."

His victory there was bloody and terrible and would long be enshrined as the most glorious that anyone could remember. It was called the 'Great War'. Two years later, though, exhausted perhaps by the sheer scale of his labours, Æthelstan was dead, and the Vikings – taking their chance – returned to York. His two brothers, Edmund and Eadred, who succeeded the great king in turn, found it a desperate struggle to reclaim his legacy. Only after several decades of ebb and flow was the integrity of the new kingdom of 'Englalande' enduringly established.

In time, it came to seem as though it had always been. Two hundred years on, by the time that William of Malmesbury sat down to write his history, the existence of England appeared the natural state of affairs. Memories had faded of the seismic character of Æthelstan's reign and of just how momentous its effect had been upon the political configuration of the entire island. Despite William's own best efforts, Æthelstan's personal renown began to fade. Today, nothing better illustrates the oblivion that has largely claimed his reputation than the fact that the very site of Brunanburh, his greatest victory, has slipped from memory. The king who founded England has largely been forgotten even by the English.

Yet though the site of Brunanburh may be unrecoverable, the implications of what was forged by Æthelstan and his dynasty more than a millennium ago have lately come to possess a renewed saliency.

As the bonds weaken that for the past 300 years have joined England and Scotland in a united kingdom, so inevitably have the English as well as the Scots begun to ponder what defines them as a nation. That a union as long-lasting as that of Great Britain might fray can hardly help but serve as a reminder that the joining of different peoples in a shared sense of identity is not something easily achieved and maintained. Perhaps we can see



King Æthelstan shown on a coin struck in Winchester



One of the earliest detailed maps of Britain, created by the St Albans monk Matthew Paris in the 1250s. By 934, King Æthelstan could justifiably claim to wield power over the entire island

THE HISTORY ESSAY

That a union as long-lasting as that of Great Britain might fray serves as a reminder that the joining of different peoples in a shared sense of identity is not something easily achieved



The rulers of Wessex forged the kingdom of England in the face of a series of devastating attacks launched by Viking invaders, such as these shown in England in a 12th-century illustration

now, in a way that we could not even a few decades ago, just how astonishing the creation of ‘Englalande’ actually was. The story of how, over the course of three generations, the royal dynasty of Wessex went from near-oblivion to fashioning a kingdom that still endures today is the most remarkable and momentous in British history. That Æthelstan, let alone Edward and Æthelred, are shadowy figures, with inner lives that are as unknowable to us as the site of Brunanburh, does not render their accomplishments any less astonishing. They and Alfred richly merit being commemorated as England’s founding fathers – or, of course, in Æthelred’s case, as England’s founding mother.

Some two and a half decades after the death of Æthelstan, a bishop named Æthelwold, surveying “the whole dominion of England”, hailed its existence as a miracle “obtained by God’s grace”. Yet Æthelwold, who had served as one of Æthelstan’s closest advisers before becoming a priest, knew full well that the united kingdom of the English had been obtained by human agency as well as by divine providence.

Even as he expressed his astonishment that it should be marked by such prosperity and peace, Æthelwold did not hesitate to give credit to the kings who had wrought so much in the teeth of

such terrible odds: “Mature in age and very prudent, and farseeing in wisdom, and hard to overcome in any strife.” Such praise, coming from a man who had grown up by Æthelstan’s side, carries rare conviction.

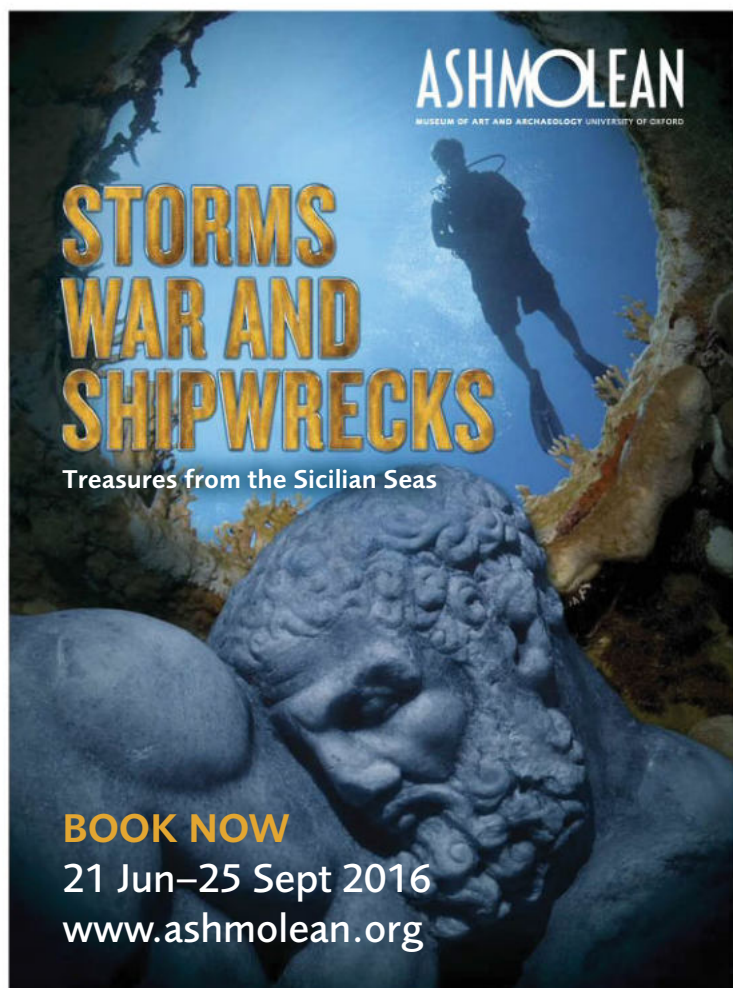
Bishop Æthelwold spoke for all those who, enjoying the order brought to lands that only decades before had been scenes of carnage and devastation, felt due gratitude for what had been achieved by Alfred and his heirs. He, close enough in time to Æthelstan’s reign to have been the great king’s protégé, understood the full scale of his debt. We, at a millennium’s remove, could perhaps remember it better. **H**

Tom Holland is a co-presenter of BBC Radio 4’s *Making History*. He will be discussing Æthelstan as part of our History Weekends in Winchester and York this autumn – see historyweekend.com

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BOOK

► **Æthelstan (Penguin Monarchs): The Making of England** by Tom Holland is published by Allen Lane at the end of June



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1966

Fifty years ago, Britain was a pop culture powerhouse. But, says **Alwyn**

The setting could hardly have been more English. A summer evening, with a little light rain; a thatched, 17th-century cottage; a secluded country lane called Duck Street in the Essex village of Wendens Ambo. It was like something that the hit television series *The Avengers* might have made up as a parody of Olde England. Or perhaps the more appropriate cultural reference point would be the fictional world of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, as recently portrayed by Margaret Rutherford in a series of films. Because on Tuesday 21 June 1966, the Duck Street cottage became the scene of a murder investigation.

The men involved were 37-year-old Reg Calvert and Oliver Smedley, a retired army major nearly 20 years his senior, the owner of the cottage. There had been a business association between the two, for they were both involved in the pirate radio stations that

were pumping out non-stop pop music from just outside British territorial waters: Calvert owned the struggling Radio City, while Smedley was part of the consortium behind the more successful Radio Atlanta.

But their relationship had been soured by a dispute over a transmitter, which Smedley had lent to Calvert and which, a few days earlier, he had forcibly repossessed, much to Calvert's fury. Hearing Calvert's voice at the door, Smedley had collected his shotgun from his bedroom and loaded it, before confronting his unwelcome visitor. "I knew he was a violent man," Smedley told the police. "He made a dive at me. I had no choice but to fire." Calvert took the full force of the blast to his chest and stomach at a distance of less than a yard.

Smedley was charged with murder, but a magistrates' court reduced this to manslaughter and, when he came to trial, he was acquitted of even that charge, the jury agreeing – without the need to retire – that he had acted in self-defence. Indeed Smedley's

account was accepted almost before he opened his mouth, with the judge, Melford Stevenson, announcing that, though there was a case to answer, it wouldn't take very long to do so. To make his point clear, Stevenson told the jury in summing up that Calvert's behaviour on the fatal night was "very much like the conduct of a lunatic".

Some people claimed this was just class bias. Rumours swirled that the establishment had decided that the reputation of a dead pop promoter from Huddersfield counted for little against that of a decorated war hero who had once been vice president of the Liberal party and co-founder of the free market think tank the Institute of Economic Affairs. But the killing also had political repercussions, which made it seem extremely fortuitous for those who opposed pirate radio.

"Gangsterism has moved into the pirates," raged Tony Benn in his diaries, "and the government's failure to act is now an absolute disgrace." He was writing of his colleagues, for he was then the Postmaster General, with

66

When the swing turned sour

W Turner, it was also a nation plagued by self-doubt and social unrest

responsibility for broadcasting. And for two years he had been unsuccessful in persuading the cabinet to introduce legislation to close down the popular pirate stations. The media outcry over the shooting of Reg Calvert transformed the public and political mood, and within a fortnight the Marine &c., Broadcasting (Offences) Bill had been published; the following year it was enacted and the era of the pirates passed. Shortly thereafter, the BBC restructured its network and created its own pop station, Radio 1 – “the swinging new radio service”, as it was billed in the *Radio Times*.

A heady rush

The sudden change of perception of the pirates, from carefree, colourful pop entrepreneurs to seedy criminality, reflected the slightly confused nature of British culture in 1966.

For the last three or four years, there had been a sense of a heady rush of exhilaration, as British music, movies, fashion, design and

A myth had sprung up of a young, classless, irreverent, vibrant country, one that **celebrated its modernity** and had a tongue-in-cheek attitude towards its imperial past

drama had enjoyed a spectacular renaissance, earning plaudits abroad as much as at home.

A persuasive myth had sprung up of a new nation: a young, classless, irreverent, vibrant country, one that celebrated its modernity and had a tongue-in-cheek attitude towards its imperial past. Even now, 50 years on, the period exerts a powerful grip on the popular imagination, an era regularly summed up in a journalistic checklist of names: the Beatles and the Rolling Stones; Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton; Mary Quant and Biba; Minis and mini-skirts; Michael Caine, Terence Stamp and Julie Christie; David Bailey, Harold Pinter and Peter Blake. It was a pop culture pantheon that came with the approval of Harold Wilson, the youngest prime minister of the century so far.

That excitement was still apparent in 1966, with much of the media revelling in the international recognition. When, in April, the American magazine *Time* famously ran a cover story on London, proclaiming it the Swinging City, the *Daily Mirror* referred to

Timeline: events that made the news in 'swinging' 66



1 March

New money
Chancellor James Callaghan (left) announces that a new decimal currency will see the end of pounds, shillings and pence – the actual change is made five years later

31 March

A bright new dawn
The first stirrings of colour television – the BBC transmits live colour coverage of the general election but only to America and to a handful of experimental sets at home

1 May

The Beatles bow out
The Fab Four make their final stage appearance in Britain at the NME Poll-Winners' show at Wembley (below). Their last ever concert will be at Candlestick Park in San Francisco

6 May



5 February

The end of an era

The last branches of the Boots lending libraries (like the one pictured below) close. The first had opened in 1899 and, at their peak, there were 440 branches



Child killers held to account

The so-called Moors Murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley (above), are found guilty on three and two counts of murder respectively. Both subsequently confess to killing two other children

the coverage as “embarrassingly (but justifiably) complimentary”.

Four years earlier, the American statesman Dean Acheson had lamented: “Great Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role.” The *Time* article rang with an optimistic reworking of that formulation. “Britain has lost an empire,” it argued. “In the process it has also recovered a lightness of heart lost during the weighty centuries of world leadership.” Or, as another cover story, in the New York magazine *Status*, put it: “There’ll Always Be an England, Baby.”

And, of course, the summer of ‘66 was to reach a glorious climax – for those, at least, who didn’t live north of Hadrian’s Wall, or west of Offa’s Dyke – with the England football team beating West Germany in the World Cup final at Wembley on 30 July.

But beyond the self-celebratory surface, more dangerous currents were becoming visible. In March, the long-running feud between the gangs of Charlie Richardson and

the Kray twins had erupted into public consciousness with a series of violent encounters, culminating in the shooting dead of George Cornell by Ronnie Kray in the Blind Beggar, a pub in London’s East End.

On the very same day as England’s Wembley victory, the Metropolitan Police arrested Richardson and others on charges of torture, robbery with violence and demanding money with menaces. It would take another three years for the Krays themselves to be sentenced to life imprisonment (by Melford Stevenson, as it happened), but already the headlines – “Another killing by gang gunmen” – were suggesting that Swinging London was not the whole story of the capital, let alone the country.

Bored Beatles

It was the implied association with this underworld that made the killing of Reg Calvert so damaging to the image of pirate radio. Even without such scare stories,

though, pop music was already experiencing something of a crisis. Three of the Beatles had recently moved out of London altogether, into big houses in Surrey, where John Lennon seemed jaded and discontented, unable to find solace in material possessions and at a loss to know quite what to do with himself. “We’ve never had time before to do anything but just be Beatles,” he explained. Ringo Starr echoed his sentiments: “I get bored like anyone else but instead of having three hours a night, I have all day to get bored in,” he said, yearning for the certainties of the past. “Sometimes I feel I’d like to stop being famous and get back to where I was in Liverpool.”

Exhausted by the relentless promotional cycle, frustrated by audiences more intent on screaming than listening, the Beatles played their last ever concert in August 1966. The same month they released their most critically revered album, *Revolver*, which opened with ‘Taxman’, George Harrison’s denunciation of the high levels of taxation endured by the

21 May



Ali beats Britain's best

World heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali (above) defeats British champion Henry Cooper at Highbury stadium in London. Eleven weeks later he beats another British hopeful, Brian London, at Earl's Court



23 June

Fleming's final shot

Octopussy, Ian Fleming's final James Bond book (above), is published posthumously. There is no Bond movie this year but plenty of spy parodies: *Modesty Blaise*, *Our Man in Marrakesh*, *The Spy with a Cold Nose*

14 July

A red letter day for Plaid Cymru

In a sensational by-election in Carmarthen, west Wales, Gwynfor Evans – shown below addressing his supporters – becomes the first Plaid Cymru MP

21 October

A tragic landslide

The village of Aberfan suffers one of the worst disasters in modern Britain when 144 are killed, including 116 children, after a colliery tip collapses and causes a landslide. The image above shows the rescue operation



29 November

Progressive policy

Home secretary Roy Jenkins (below) announces the end of flogging in English and Welsh jails. (It ended in Scotland in 1948)



wealthy. Meanwhile the group's closest rivals, the Rolling Stones, were addressing ever darker material in singles such as '19th Nervous Breakdown', 'Paint It Black' and 'Mother's Little Helper'. The music was still breaking new ground, and still attracting mass audiences, but there was a definite sense of decadence setting in.

There was also a cynicism that hadn't been there in the first rush of success. And that was to be seen too in hit films that year like *Alfie* and *Georgy Girl*. In these visions of modern mores, there was little joy to be found in the much vaunted sexual revolution that had accompanied and fuelled the explosion of youth culture. Similarly in April 1966, Julie Christie won the Best Actress Oscar for her role in *Darling* as a shallow, money-grubbing social climber living in a moral vacuum. The movie was advertised in America, where it was more successful than in Britain, as being "made by adults – with adults – for adults", but its defining feature was actually an

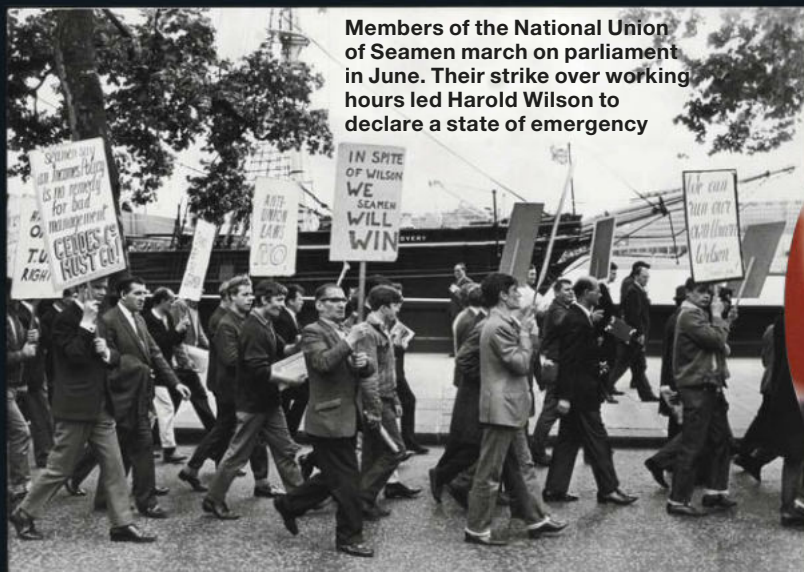
In films such as *Georgy Girl* and *Alfie*, there was little joy to be found in the **much vaunted sexual revolution** that had fuelled the explosion of youth culture

immature petulance that was not uncharacteristic of the time. "To me, adult appearance was very unattractive, alarming and terrifying," observed the country's best-known fashion designer, Mary Quant. "I saw no reason why childhood should not last for ever." The cultural excitement of the mid-1960s can be seen as an extended adolescence and 1966 as the year when that fantasy began to feel unsustainable.

Darling did at least have the superficial appearance of glamour. The same could hardly be said of the other great British success at the Oscars. Peter Watkins' *The War Game* was an unrelentingly grim account of Britain after a nuclear attack and won the award for Best Documentary. Commissioned and made by the BBC for the Wednesday Play strand, it was considered – following expressions of concern from the government – to be "too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting" and wasn't shown on television for 20 years.

The most celebrated Wednesday Play of the

Movies, murders and mob violence: 1966 in pictures



Members of the National Union of Seamen march on parliament in June. Their strike over working hours led Harold Wilson to declare a state of emergency



Harold Wilson – pictured at October's Labour party conference – won an impressive general election victory in March but, by July, found himself accused of being a traitor

Julie Christie plays the “money-grubbing” Diana in *Darling*, a performance that would win her an Oscar for Best Actress



Men line the rails around Radio City, on an abandoned naval fort in the Thames Estuary. In June, Radio City was at the centre of a murder enquiry that would lead to the closure of Britain's pirate radio stations



Ronnie and Reggie Kray enjoy a cup of tea on 6 August shortly after being questioned by police over the murder of George Cornell

A scene from Peter Watkins' documentary *The War Game*, which was deemed too hard-hitting for television



year, Ken Loach's film of Jeremy Sandford's *Cathy Come Home*, proved almost as horrifying with its depiction of homelessness in contemporary London. And the most talked about new comedy series on the BBC, *Till Death Us Do Part* with Warren Mitchell as the bigoted docker Alf Garnett, was equally removed from the spirit of Swinging London.

If the cultural imagery was beginning to look increasingly pessimistic in 1966, the same was true politically. In March, Harold Wilson led the Labour party to an impressive election victory. In 1964 he had managed a parliamentary majority of just four: now he had nearly 100. Less than two months later, however, he was declaring a state of emergency in response to a strike by the National Union of Seamen. Worse still, he was denouncing in the Commons the "tightly knit group of politically motivated men" who, he claimed, lay behind the strike. It was the first national strike by seamen in more than half a century and the suggestion that it was simply the product of communist agitation succeeded only in alienating many members of the Labour party.

There was a further straw in the wind when Wilson went to the University of Sussex in July and was met by hundreds of students demonstrating against his supposed support for American intervention in Vietnam. Jeering and cries of "Wilson is a traitor!" were to be heard in some quarters, though protest organisers insisted that such rudeness was never their intention. They blamed the disturbances on "outside influences down from London for the occasion".

Race, sex, disability

Yet this was to be a government largely remembered for supporting a raft of legislation that transformed the lives of virtually every family in the country: the legalisation of abortion and of male homosexuality (within limits); the prescription of oral contraceptives on the NHS, even to the unmarried; and the curbing of discrimination on grounds of race, sex and disability. It also created the Open University, the policy of which Wilson himself said he was most proud.

In retrospect, Wilson's government has been seen as progressive and interventionist, charting a new direction for the left but at the time the divisions were more apparent than the achievements. And the splits of 1966 – distancing the government from militant unionists and from radical students – were to have far-reaching consequences. For those 'tightly knit groups' and the 'outside influences' turned out to be early manifestations of the more troubled times to come. The same could be said of the strange people encoun-

In Sussex, Harold Wilson was assailed by hundreds of students railing against his supposed support for US intervention in Vietnam

tered by the jazz singer and critic George Melly at an Aubrey Beardsley exhibition in the summer of 1966, an odd collection of youth who "gave the impression of belonging to a secret society which had not yet declared its aims or intentions". It was only some months later that he realised it had been his first exposure to "the emerging underground".

So the signs were there of a change in the social weather, of the fragmentation of the nation that was to follow, but it was still possible to see Britain in 1966 as a large, sprawling family. The younger generation might be getting a bit excitable and a bit cheeky, causing their elders and betters to tut and fret, but they hadn't entirely run wild.

And anyway, the young weren't so numerous that they couldn't be outvoted. Even when it came to pop music, their chosen cultural territory, they didn't have it all their own way: the biggest selling singles in Britain in 1966 were strictly middle-of-the-road records by 'Gentleman' Jim Reeves and Frank Sinatra, while the year ended with Tom Jones's 'Green, Green Grass of Home' in the midst of a seven-week run at number 1 in the charts.

At the end of October 1966, viewers of the BBC science fiction serial *Doctor Who* witnessed – for the first time – the regeneration of the Doctor, the transition from William Hartnell to Patrick Troughton. He didn't look, sound or behave in the same way as he had previously but we were assured that he remained in essence the same being. As a symbol of a changing of the guard, it wasn't a bad metaphor for the country as a whole that year. **II**

England win, Wilson cashes in

"Have you ever noticed," joked Harold Wilson, "how England wins the World Cup only under a Labour government?" Sadly, it proved to be a very short winning streak. England were knocked out of the 1970 World Cup four days before Wilson was voted out of Downing Street and then failed to qualify for the next two tournaments, both held during a Labour government.

But the ensuing decades of disappointment have only made the 1966 triumph even sweeter in retrospect. The names have become part of English folklore, from the on-pitch heroes – Bobby Moore, Bobby Charlton, Geoff Hurst et al – to the peripheral figures: World Cup Willie, the Union Jack-wearing lion who served as mascot, and Pickles the dog, who found the trophy itself after it was stolen from a pre-tournament exhibition in London.

Never one to miss a PR opportunity, Wilson awarded a knighthood to the manager, Alf Ramsey, just as he was to do with Matt Busby, manager of Manchester United, when that club won the European Cup two years later. Jock Stein, on the other hand, who led Celtic to victory in the same competition in 1967, was not similarly recognised – fuelling a suspicion that Scottish football was not taken as seriously by the Westminster government.



Bobby Moore holds the Jules Rimet trophy aloft following England's World Cup triumph, 30 July 1966

Alwyn W Turner is an associate lecturer in the department of history and politics at the University of Chichester. His books include *Crisis? What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2013)

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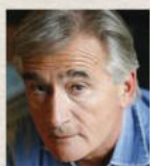
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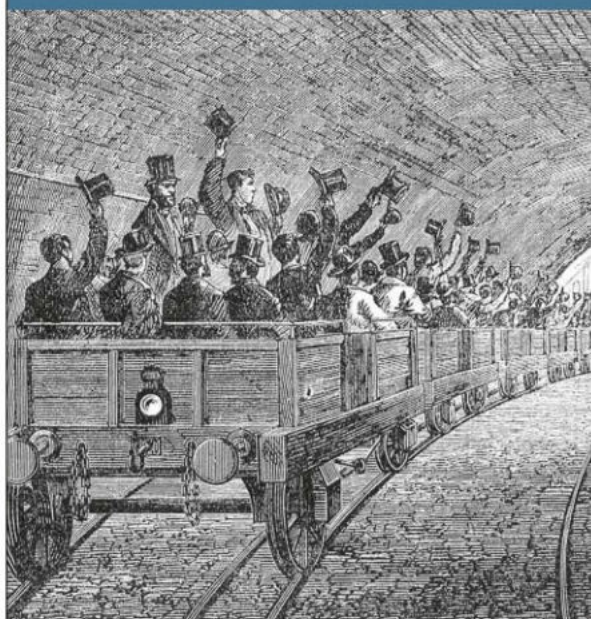


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Daniel Todman pictured at Queen Mary University of London. "By the late 1930s, many Britons thought Hitler was spitting on the graves of a million First World War servicemen," he says. "A unifying factor of the Second World War is that it was an anti-Hitler war"

Photography by
Fran Monks



INTERVIEW / DANIEL TODMAN

"Everything that happened in 1940 isn't somehow down to Winston Churchill"

Daniel Todman talks to **Matt Elton** about the first book in his ambitious new two-volume history of the Second World War, which explores military, social and political events alike

FRAN MONKS

PROFILE DANIEL TODMAN

A graduate of the London School of Economics and the University of Cambridge, Todman taught at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst before joining Queen Mary University of London in 2003. He is now senior lecturer in history at that institution, and his previous books include *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (Hambledon Continuum, 2003).

IN CONTEXT

Unlike the First World War, which arrived relatively suddenly, the Second World War was preceded in the 1930s by a sense that conflict was looming. Daniel Todman opens the first volume of his history against this backdrop, considering the international crisis and how it shaped political and social developments in Britain. With key emphasis on the events of 1940, the book then explores the war until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 brought the US into the conflict.

Why did you decide to tackle such an enormous subject as the Second World War in the way that you have?

I've always been fascinated by the Second World War and Britain's part in it. But it struck me that the story of Britain in the war has often been written and understood separately, with a clear distinction between the fighting fronts and the home front. That seemed problematic, because the only way to think about how the war was fought and the impact that it had was to try to bring them together. That's the guiding light for this project: how the interrelation of these stories, and how telling them together, changes our understanding of the war at different levels: economic, social and political.

The Second World War remains a huge reference point in Britain today but actually it isn't terribly well understood – or, rather, it's understood in different ways by different people. Some people know far more about a particular aspect of the war than I ever will, and one of the amazing things about writing a history of it is trying to find a way to tap into their expertise but also say something new for them – so they can think about how their particular aspect fits into everything else.

Another thing, which came to me through teaching at an undergraduate level, is that an awful lot of young people now don't really have any knowledge of the war. Those people need a bigger, broader picture to be able to make sense of any particular detail.

How should we understand the Britain of 1937, when your book starts?

One of the reasons for starting in 1937 is to get a sense of a Britain that is very different from today. In many ways it was nothing like the nation of today – although we can see a lot of modern Britain emerging. So what I've

tried to capture in the first chapters of my book is a sense of it simultaneously being a very modern place but one with continuities stretching much further back.

It was a country in which mass democracy had been a relatively recent arrival, with all sorts of worries about what that might mean. Yet it had emerged from the period of greatest anxiety in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. So actually it was a very stable place with a widespread democracy, even if people were arguing about what that was going to be. It was also a politically vibrant place, in lots of ways: there was a big ideological divide based on whether people were socialist or not, and that was a very important part of defining who people were.

It's also important to understand that the First World War still had an abiding influence on Britain in the 1930s. There was still a widespread idea that the only way in which the sacrifice of that war could be justified was if peace was preserved. In the early 1930s that was about avoiding international war, which is why you see popular pacifism having such strength. But by the end of the 1930s that was very easily changed into seeing Hitler as spitting on the graves of a million servicemen by insisting on having a war – so it was seen as a war that needed to be fought. A unifying factor of the Second World War is that it was an anti-Hitler war.

In some ways, though, the idea of reaching a compromise was built into the British state by that point. There were many awful things about Britain in the 1930s, but it was still a nation that reached political compromises.

How did the personalities of Britain's politicians – and how they interacted – shape the course of the war?

When I started writing this book, I didn't want to put personalities into it, because I was thinking: "Winston Churchill and Neville Chamberlain... what a boring way

of talking about the Second World War". And then, of course, when I started writing it, I realised that it's impossible to understand the war without looking at these people and their personalities.

It's important to assess these individuals' role in a way that is balanced and interesting, and which gives readers a sense of how much individual influence mattered. One of the things that I try to do is to recast the war so that everything that happened to Britain in 1940 isn't somehow down to Churchill. British resilience in 1940 is about a lot more than the force of his personality. But the war did give Churchill an extraordinary chance to shape not only how Britain fought but also – for good or ill – the Anglo-American relationship and Britain's position in India.

At the same time, I bring out the role of other individuals who are sometimes overshadowed by Churchill's colossal presence – not just at the time, but in his subsequent writing about the war. That includes other politicians – most obviously, Anthony Eden and Clement Attlee – but also lesser-known figures such as Arthur Purvis, the head of the British Purchasing Commission in North America, who played a really key role in trying to mobilise US industry for the war effort. So individuals matter – just not always the ones we think.

Why was Britain able to fight on after the defeat of France in 1940?

Although British power was declining, it remained an extremely strong and resilient nation. It was geographically blessed because you had to invade it over sea. It had a huge navy that, while not large enough to cover all of the threats that it faced, was more than big enough to make sure the tiny German navy couldn't launch an invasion in 1940.

It was also very wealthy, both in its assets and in what it could leverage in terms of its debts, which was out of everyone else's league. The shock of the French defeat in 1940 was huge, and the fact that you had to renegotiate all the systems of trade was very challenging. In terms of making sure that you could keep importing things such as steel, having a stockpile of wealth that could be used quickly was very important.

The other side of this, of course, is that Germany was in no position to talk Britain out of the war. That's part of the way in which I try to recast 1940 in this book, so

"The war remains a huge reference point in Britain today, but actually isn't terribly well understood"



British troops embark for the continent ahead of Germany's defeat of France in June 1940. "In a way, the only people who were more taken by surprise by what happened in France than the French and the British were the Germans," says Daniel Todman

that we see it in terms of British strength and German weakness. In a way, the only people who were more taken by surprise by what happened in France than the French and the British were the Germans. The German high command had not prepared at all for this dramatic change in the war. It's very hard to see how they could actually have imposed themselves on the UK, and that's the big difference between France and Britain.

Are there any other ways that you'd like people to see 1940 differently?

It's important to recognise what a frightening moment 1940 was: that, whatever we think in retrospect, people believed there was a high risk of invasion. Respecting that and explaining why it was so disturbing is really important, because it helps to explain why Churchill's political status was so high. It was not because people thought he was necessarily that good a prime minister, but because he was seen as a hero who stood up in 1940 when people were frightened.

But at the same time it's important to ask what was shaping people's lives in Britain in 1940. It may not have been bombs, terrifying though they were and as devastating an impact as they had in certain areas. Large parts of Britain were untouched, and what may have most mattered there was the shipyards opening again, or the price of food going up, or the financial problems caused to families by men being conscripted. That can be just as definitive at a personal level as any of the high politics we've been talking about.

At what point did you decide to finish this first volume, and why?

The book ends in December 1941 with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Americans finally joining the war and Germany's declaration of war on America. I've been very fortunate to be able to make this two volumes, because it means that I can replicate the structure of the war: from the end of 1941 what was essentially a European conflict, albeit one with global impact, became a world war. It's the point at which you can see a lot of crises that were there since the 1930s in the far east and India breaking through with new strength. I wanted to end with a sense of one conflict ending and another beginning.

You write that this is the last point at which Britain had the power to shape world history. Why is that the case?

Britain ended the war much more powerful than it had been in 1940. In terms of its military, naval and aerial power, it was colossally strong. A lot of that was built on US finance but was none the worse for that.

But a lot of the things that happened in the second half of the war meant that this power was unsustainable as an alternative to the superpowers in the postwar era, both in terms of the cost of maintaining empire and trade and in military terms. There was a sense of a technological shift in the second half of the war, particularly the overwhelming effect of air power and how that changed how the war was fought and determined its

"Whatever we think in retrospect, people in the UK in 1940 believed there was a high risk of invasion"

end. Air power was developing so quickly and was so expensive that it proved beyond what Britain was able to maintain.

How would you like this book to change readers' views of the period?

I would be overjoyed if it did two things. If it leads people who already think that they know something about the war to think about what they know and ask themselves *how* they know it, I'll be ecstatic. And for people who think they don't know anything about the war but know that it's important, I'd like them to have a sense of the drama of the conflict but also of just what a complex event it was. The greatest service that you can do for your readers as a historian is not necessarily to change their ideas but to help them engage with complexity. **H**



Britain's War, Volume I: Into Battle, 1937-1941 by Daniel Todman (Allen Lane, 848 pages, £30)



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Charles Edward Stuart, who aimed to regain the British throne in 1745, as seen in a c19th-century painting. Jacqueline Riding's book is "accessible, comprehensive and even-handed"

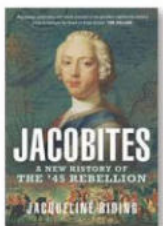
The pretender's failure

RAB HOUSTON on a look at the 1745 Jacobite rising, a doomed attempt to return an exiled family to the British throne

Jacobites: A New History of the '45 Rebellion

by Jacqueline Riding

Bloomsbury Publishing, 608 pages, £25



Forget whisky, oil and tourism: the Jacobites could be Scotland's biggest industry. The subject of hundreds of books, articles and films and the source of countless myths, their magnificent failure is

enduringly fascinating. Now seen as a doomed romantic anachronism or a sort of emotive nationalism, post-1689 Jacobitism was a political and religious movement based on divine-right succession and dynastic loyalty.

Often misunderstood as a Scottish independence movement, it was in fact an alternative claim to the British throne by the house of Stewart. By the time its last member, Queen Anne, died childless in 1714, the parliament in London had vested the succession in the stoutly Protestant house of

Hanover, bypassing the all-too-obviously Catholic Stewart claimant. In an age when key players achieved political change as much on the battlefield as by the ballot box, the Stewart bid to regain power in 1745 may well have been Hanoverian Britain's worst crisis – greater even than the direct French threat.

In 1715 more people supported the 'Old Pretender', James Edward Stewart, than during the second major Jacobite rising in 1745, but in England they were poorly led and badly organised, making them easy to crush. Recriminations after the 1715 debacle took decades to fade, weakening the Jacobite impetus. Yet, by 1745, strong forces destabilised Britain and Ireland: antagonism to 30 years of left-leaning Whig rule among disaffected Tories, especially their religious policies; economic woes in Scotland after the Union of 1707 failed to deliver; the serious riots in Edinburgh in 1736, which seemed to challenge the very legitimacy of government from Westminster; and discrimination and destitution in Ireland. Additionally, the 1745 Jacobites had important advantages. James Edward's son, Charles Edward Stewart was a charismatic, if inexperienced leader with French and Irish support. Thus his fast, manoeuvrable army seized Edinburgh and in September 1745 trounced opposition forces at Prestonpans east of the city in just 15 minutes, moving swiftly south to reach deep into England at Derby.

But thereafter the rebels lost the initiative and things began to go wrong. Promises of support from some English Tories proved to be hot air and disputes over military tactics led to retreat and failure to link up with the French. Yet even in January 1746 all was not lost, and the Jacobites were still winning victories. Then they retreated into the Highlands which, far from their natural stronghold, deprived them of support

Forget whisky and oil: the Jacobites could be Scotland's biggest industry



COMING SOON...

"Next issue, I'll be talking to Anne Sebba about **Les Parisiennes**, her exploration of the experiences of women in Paris during and immediately after the Second World War. And our experts will be reviewing the latest books, including a timely look at Britain's relationship with Europe." *Matt Elton, reviews editor*

from the north-east Lowlands, whose religious, political and social makeup was far more sympathetic to the cause.

In recent years the Jacobites have taken on a political significance that they lacked for two centuries. In an age of resurgent nationalism, Jacobite defeat at Culloden on 16 April 1746 and its aftermath once again polarise opinion; it is to Jacqueline Riding's credit that she manages to avoid partiality. Indeed, those who want an accessible, comprehensive, even-handed, and up-to-date survey, without myth or mysticism, apology or polemic, will find her book suits their purposes admirably.

Modern studies of the Jacobites look beyond Scotland, to encompass all parts of Britain and Ireland, not to mention

This story of near-success and ultimate failure is pieced together from first-hand perspectives

mainland Europe and the wider world. They are alert to the implications of the rising for the creation of a truly united United Kingdom and for the formation of the British empire. Riding reflects this trend. Her specialism in fine art, heritage and architecture means the book has an unusually acute sense of person and place.

This substantial volume will weigh heavily on the coffee table. Yet it is both scholarly and readable, with 60 bite-sized chapters each presenting a detailed, vivid part of a complex rebellion. Of course, much of the material will be familiar to specialists. The novelty lies in how the story of near success and ultimate failure is pieced together from many small components and first-hand perspectives: a kind of Lego history. Diplomacy, warfare and politics all feature but so too does human strength and frailty; there are the great and the good (and not-so-good) but also the more obscure, all with a fascinating part to play in one of Britain's defining crises. **H**

Rab Houston is author of *Scotland: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP, 2008)

Trial and error?

LISA PINE considers an account of the trials that followed the Second World War that aims to separate truth from myth

A Passing Fury: Searching for Justice at the End of World War II

by **AT Williams**

Jonathan Cape, 496 pages, £25



In his new book, AT Williams examines the unique endeavour of the war crimes trials at the end of the Second World War, clearly showing how the anger unleashed

by the discovery of multiple atrocities was dealt with in a complex, unwieldy legal process. This was hailed as a victory for civilised and rational behaviour. And thus, the author claims, the myth of Nuremberg was born.

That's because, Williams argues, for all of its lasting significance, Nuremberg – "the word, the idea, the trial" – could not capture more than a fragment of the history of the justice meted out by the British and their allies after the end of the war. Hundreds of other trials became part of a vast effort to bring to justice those responsible for the atrocities carried out by the Third Reich.

As such, Williams says much about the Nuremberg Tribunal but also assesses the work of a whole host of other less iconic trials that dealt with the perpetrators of the crimes of the Third Reich. He gives an excellent account of the trials' protagonists, and the motivations and restrictions that informed their actions. The telling of this history forms the strongest part of the book, and the

author's travelogue to various Nazi concentration camp sites is compelling. Williams' subjectivity and strong expression of emotions are evident throughout. He is also unabashedly judgmental in his writing, rather than simply presenting the facts and allowing the readers to form their own views.

Williams describes the fury and disgust of the Allies as they uncovered the Nazi concentration and death camps. He carefully explains the differences among the Allies in how best to seek justice and the logistical difficulties they faced in doing so – including, notably, a shortage of personnel. As he shows, the Allies needed evidence that was "clear, comprehensive and overwhelming" – and that was very difficult to gather.

There was a great sense of urgency about the trials, but Williams demonstrates how the Allies' "fury" and search for retribution "ultimately descended into indifference". This happened surprisingly early on, towards the end of 1945 – just six months after the fighting ended. Williams argues that the justice delivered after the war at Nuremberg and the other trials "fixed an image of self-purity in the British historical psyche" – despite, as he puts it, being "an impersonal and imperfect reaction to human cruelty and human suffering".

Williams presents a more complex picture of the trials than might be expected, then. Yet he still concludes that, although the postwar justice may have been "symbolic, shambolic, illusory... it was essential for all that". This is a fascinating read. **H**

Lisa Pine is reader in history at London South Bank University and editor of *Life and Times in Nazi Germany* (Bloomsbury, 2016)



Nazi camp commander Josef Kramer at the 1945-46 war trials. AT Williams considers the "fury and disgust" of the period

GETTY IMAGES



Enslaved children are taught to read the Bible in this 1877 painting. Manisha Sinha's book "will oblige future scholars to rethink the very nature of abolition itself", says James Walvin

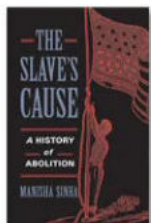
The road to freedom

JAMES WALVIN rates a study of the American slave trade and its abolition that places the role of enslaved people at the heart of the story

The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition

by Manisha Sinha

Yale, 784 pages, £25



The enslavement of millions of Africans was a central element in the shaping of the modern Americas. On the back of the enslaved, swathes of land were converted to profitable development: the west benefited incalculably, and in the process modern social habits were born. Millions smoked tobacco, developed a passion for sweetness in food and drink, and enjoyed the luxury of cheap cotton clothing: all courtesy of the slave gangs. In recent years, an army of

scholars has explored every conceivable aspect of this story. Yet one of the most perplexing issues in the history of slavery in the Americas is the way that it ended.

Why should slavery, which yielded such prosperity and wellbeing to slave owners, states and distant interests, give way to freedom? Everywhere, slavery was a tough institution that proved resistant to criticism and attack. Sometimes it yielded to violent upheaval, as in Haiti; sometimes to cataclysmic warfare (the US); and, unusually, via more peaceful means – the British colonies, for instance.

The enslaved faced a hard, dispiriting path out of bondage

Manisha Sinha's new book invites us to take a fresh look at the entire story. It's an extraordinary work, which asks the reader to re-evaluate the very nature of abolition on both sides of the Atlantic. It ranges from the origins of criticism of the slave trade in the 18th century, to the onset of the American Civil War.

At times, readers may feel bewildered by the sheer welter of information, but it should not distract from the book's originality and importance. It is clear that we must now think of abolition in a different light. Though it was grounded in the American Revolution (and the wider world of revolution post-1776) and in the pioneering criticism of Quakers, what shines through *The Slave's Cause* is the role of the enslaved themselves: the persistence and dogged determination of slaves to seek their own freedom.

By careful analysis of each phase of abolition, and by explaining the range of enslaved reactions to slavery (from foot-dragging to open revolt and escape via preaching, self-education and literate campaigning) we are offered a panorama of enslaved activism against bondage.

Theirs was a hard, dispiriting path to follow. At every turn they faced violence, obstruction, legal and political frustrations and disheartening failures. There were schisms in their ranks: personal clashes between major African-American figures and disputes about colonisation or emigration. But such frustrations and failures seem merely to have hardened their resolve to press on for freedom.

Sinha is not satisfied simply to write of abolition. Her book seeks to illustrate the importance of abolition as the seedbed of a broader campaign that embraced women's rights, the plight of labour, critiques of capitalism and imperialism. All of that needs further exploration.

Although it may have benefited from greater reference to other scholars' work, this is an important book. It is shaped by historical imagination and anchored in extensive research, and will oblige future scholars to rethink the very nature of abolition itself. No mean feat. **H**

James Walvin is professor of history emeritus at the University of York

Henry Innes-Ker, 8th Duke of Roxburghe (far left), takes part in a pheasant shoot, 1922. Adrian Tinniswood's study of England's country houses in the period is "beautifully written", says Hallie Rubenhold



Trouble on the estate

HALLIE RUBENHOLD enjoys a vibrant exploration of England's country houses and their residents between the two world wars

The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars

by Adrian Tinniswood

Jonathan Cape, 416 pages, £25



Few things seem to be as enduring as the appetite for stories about Britain's upper echelons in the interwar period. The romanticised view of life in the English country house during

this era has become one of the nation's greatest cultural exports, from Evelyn Waugh's books to Bertie Wooster and *Downton Abbey*. Celebrated, longed for and even fetishised, an entire mythology has grown up around what is seen as the beautifully tragic demise of a way of life.

Unsurprisingly, the study of the slow decline of the landed classes and their houses during the first half of the 20th century is hardly new. Among the many books that have touched on the theme is Robert Graves and Alan Hodge's iconic

The Long Weekend. Published in 1940, the authors had hardly waited for the lamps to go out before commemorating the previous era as one of tremendous social and behavioural shifts. The book is now regarded as a standard text that has largely contributed to our picture of Britain between 1918 and 1939.

By titling his own book *The Long Weekend*, Adrian Tinniswood uses Graves and Hodge's work as reference point for a study of "a transitional moment of leisurely uncertainty" in the story of the English country house and its owners during this era of social reshuffling. Yet the tales he provides give a much broader perspective on the issues facing the nobility than was available in 1940. This *Long Weekend* enjoys the benefit of many decades of hindsight.

***These are not just
stories of country piles
but of the individuals
who loved them***

One of the charms of Graves and Hodge's book is its readability: the story of the interwar period is told through a series of themed chapters. Tinniswood has been equally savvy in retaining this structure: each chapter offers an insight into an aspect of land-owning life, from house parties and homosexuality to the influence of architect Edwin Lutyens. It is this series of gorgeously written case studies, many of which read like short stories, that makes Tinniswood's book so enchanting. However, while poignant, it's also not without its robust historical points.

Tinniswood tops and tails his book with a survey of the state of the landed classes in 1939 and in 1918, a time when already one in nine peers had given up their country seat. As the author argues, the true problem during the interwar

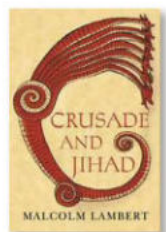
Birth of a conflict

SEAN MCGLYNN applauds a guide to holy war in the Middle East – and how it still shapes the region centuries later

Crusade and Jihad

by Malcolm Lambert

Profile, 320 pages, £20



Malcolm Lambert's eminent place in medieval scholarship is assured by his indispensable *Medieval Heresy* (Edward Arnold, 1977). He has here written a very different book on the holy war phenomenon aimed

squarely and successfully at the popular market. Eschewing reference notes, and with only a brief bibliography, he instead focuses on an accessible but highly knowledgeable overview of the struggle for power between Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land.

Lambert suggests that crusade and jihad are not opposing forces that merely feed symbiotically off each other. Instead, he emphasises that both were very much products of their own societies and their own internal politics.

For Lambert, the key figure in the deliberate development of jihad is the emir Nūr al-Dīn, who crushed the disastrous Second Crusade (1147–49), thereby preparing the way for Saladin. He makes the vital point that these and other Sunni Muslims were as interested in purifying the land of Shia 'heresy' as they were of Christian interlopers.

Crusade and jihad were mutually reinforcing. The loss of Acre in 1291 (briefly discussed here), and with it the Kingdom of Jerusalem, marked exactly a century since Richard the Lionheart took it on the Third Crusade. Then, up to 3,000 Muslim prisoners were massacred; the joyous recapture of the city in 1291 was also marked with a commemorative bloodbath, thus somewhat buttressing



years was not that land-owning families were increasingly going broke, but that no one wanted their stately homes or knew what to do with them.

Yet solutions came in many forms. The US newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst both bought and denuded historic properties, while Labour MP Sir Charles Trevelyan threw open the doors of Wallington Hall to his tenants before handing it over to the National Trust.

These are not just stories of bricks and mortar, but of the individuals who loved, loathed, preserved, modernised and often parted with these country piles. Tinniswood's beautifully written book retells them perfectly. **H**

Hallie Rubenhold is a social historian and author of books including *The Scandalous Lady W* (Vintage, 2015)

the crusade-jihad counterbalances.

The last quarter of the book looks at the crusades' long legacy, so pertinent to current events. Here, as he examines Christian and Islamic developments up to today's jihadists, Lambert is more selective and cautious in his coverage. Yet having traced essential continuities from Islam's origins, and followed the religion's evolution and divisions into the crusading era, he is able to shed important light on the modern situation. This attention to Islamic perspectives offers valuable insights not often found in works of general crusading history. **H**

Sean McGlynn is author of *Kill Them All: Cathars and Carnage in the Albigensian Crusade* (The History Press, 2015)

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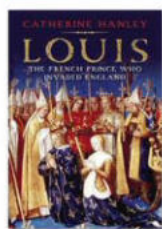
The king who never was

SOPHIE AMBLER recommends a biography of Louis VIII of France, who rebel barons hoped to install on the English throne

Louis: The French Prince who Invaded England

by Catherine Hanley

Yale University Press, 296 pages, £25



Louis VIII, son of Philip Augustus, king of France, and almost king of England, lived a short life packed with excitement. After King John reneged on Magna

Carta, Louis was invited by the English rebel barons to invade and take the throne. Within months of landing on the Kent coast in May 1216, he had seized more than half the kingdom.

Catherine Hanley's account makes it clear why Louis won so much support. He was daring and skilled with a sword but also astute and honourable, keeping his word and protecting his supporters even at personal cost. He was even-handed with his patronage, a devout Christian and a chaste husband. In short, he was everything that John was not.

Ultimately Louis failed in his cause, though he was never vanquished personally on the field of battle.

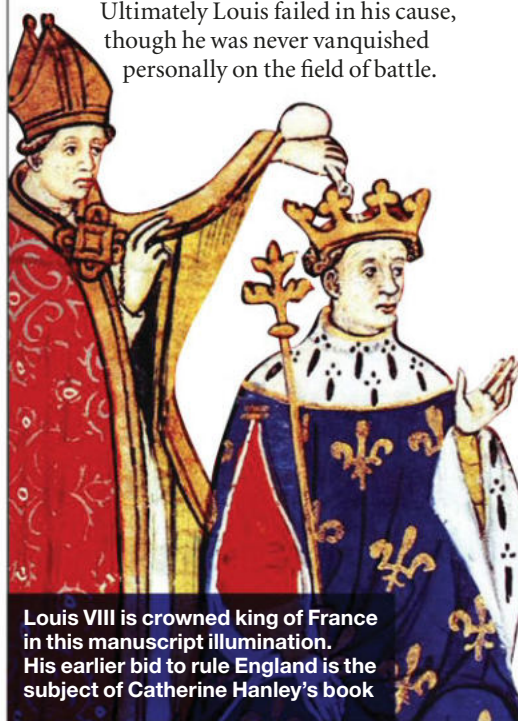
His supporters were defeated at Lincoln in May 1217, and his reinforcements at Sandwich in August, by forces fighting for John's young son, Henry III. Louis returned to France, to be reunited with his queen (the formidable Blanche of Castile) and children and soon succeeded his father as king of France.

Yet still committed to extending French royal power, and to championing the church's cause, he led his armies into the Languedoc as part of the Albigensian Crusade. It was here that he succumbed to dysentery in November 1226, ending a brief reign (little more than three years) and a brief life (he was only 39). Louis was remembered with real affection: one contemporary wrote that he "was as brave as a lion towards his enemies, and marvellously peaceable towards the good". As Hanley admits, we cannot know if he would have made a great king of France, but one is left with the feeling that he would have made – and almost did make – a great king of England.

I have been waiting for a biography of Louis for a long time, and few are better qualified to write it than Hanley. She has a command of the sources and skilfully deploys her expertise in medieval arms and warfare (her time spent at the castle construction site at Guédelon, for instance, means that she knows how Louis constructed castle walls). We get a strong sense of the characters, not only Louis but also those who helped to shape his life: from his partner, Blanche, his father, Philip, and life-long friend the Count of St Pol, to his adversaries King John and William Marshal.

Hanley tells Louis' tale with pace and a lightness of touch. Readers should not be fooled by the publisher's disappointing decision not to include endnotes: this is serious history, as well as a gripping – and poignant – story. **H**

Sophie Ambler is a researcher at the University of East Anglia



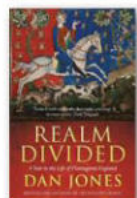
Louis VIII is crowned king of France in this manuscript illumination. His earlier bid to rule England is the subject of Catherine Hanley's book



Realm Divided: A Year in the Life of Plantagenet England

by Dan Jones

Head of Zeus, 304 pages, £8.99



Last year's 800th anniversary of Magna Carta produced an entire library of new books. Some were dull, others excessively opinionated. Magna Carta appeals to many constituencies – scholars, lawyers, politicians, the general public – each of which needed its own particular telling of the story.

Dan Jones's version, aimed at a popular audience, is one of the more accomplished. Tracing John's activities on a monthly basis across the momentous year either side of Runnymede, Jones achieves a balance between narrative and analysis. At key points, he turns aside to consider the king's appearance, his clothes and banners, his obsession with hunting and the taking of life, and the ways in which Magna Carta reflects a new understanding both of political society and of the health of the nation. We are left in no doubt that the king was a tyrant. Yet his failure was due to circumstance rather than to inevitable fate.

There are many thrills en route. From his defeat at the battle of Bouvines in 1214, to the siege of Rochester a year later, the king was not only kept permanently in the saddle but had to deal with a weight of military and administrative crises that would have crushed a lesser man. His failing, as Jones points out, sprang not from a lack of ability but from an intelligence too devious and too cruel. Then as now, mistrust was fatal to political

negotiations and left the barons little choice but to make war on their sovereign. From this emerged a settlement, Magna Carta (supplied here in full English translation), that ever since has been hardwired into the English sense of identity.

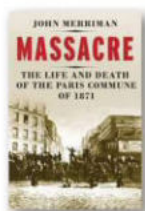
Jones is to be congratulated for telling his story with panache and originality. He deserves to be widely read.

Nicholas Vincent is professor of medieval history at the University of East Anglia

Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune of 1871

by John Merriman

Yale, 336 pages, £10.99



The Paris Commune, the revolutionary government that ruled that city from March to May 1871, has been constantly

reinvented: was it a civil war, a Marxist workers' revolution, a revolt only of some districts – or all those things? This book lets eyewitnesses spell out in

painful detail the switch from optimistic celebration to violent repression, in which soldiers were persuaded that fellow citizens had become barbarians.

The Commune was elected after a five-month siege by the Prussians that had left Paris near to starvation, its economy in tatters. The president of the Third Republic Adolphe Thiers, tried to bully Parisians to pay off in one week debts incurred during the siege and hand over hundreds of cannon they had financed to resist the Prussians. He ignored the demands of the Commune to run Paris: his only mission was its military defeat. An army of 150,000 was amassed and Paris ruthlessly bombarded. Contrary to international law, hundreds of captured prisoners were shot without trial.

This is an insightful account of an extraordinary period of 19th-century European history and a passionate reminder that legally constituted governments can treat citizens with illegal, brutal violence – and never be required to apologise.

Pamela Pilbeam is emeritus professor at Royal Holloway, University of London

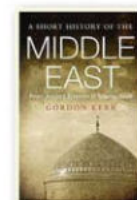


Violence in the Paris Commune as depicted in a contemporary woodcut. A new book features extensive eyewitness accounts

A Short History of the Middle East

by Gordon Kerr

Pocket Essentials, 192 pages, £8.99



At a time when the Middle East is riddled with conflicts of great complexity and ferocity, and when the migration crisis

and the threat of Islamist terrorism are threatening to destabilise Europe, this book's publication could scarcely be more timely. Yet to compress into fewer than 200 pages the history of a region that stretches from Iran to Turkey and Egypt and which also encompasses the Levant and the Arabian peninsula seems near impossible.

Despite acknowledging this challenge, Gordon Kerr has kept his nerve and produced a really useful survey extending over seven millennia, starting with the Sumerian civilisation and ending with the Paris massacres of November 2015 and the intensification of attempts to degrade and destroy the so-called Islamic State.

The index reveals just how widely Kerr has cast his admittedly rather small net. The cast of key players ranges from Ramesses II to Osama bin Laden, from Moses to Nasser – although oddly the Prophet Muhammad receives only two entries to Ronald Reagan's four. But if you want to find out more about the Druze, Hezbollah, Hittites and many more, this neat little book offers a succinct introduction. **H**

Denis Judd is the author of books including *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (IB Tauris, 2011)

TV & RADIO

HISTORY
MAGAZINE
CHOICE

Fatal error

Tommies

Radio Radio 4, ongoing

On the first day of the battle of the Somme, the British suffered 57,470 casualties. One reason this figure was so high, suggests Jonathan Ruffle's returning drama of front-line life, was because of a signalling error.

Among other BBC programmes to mark the centenary, *The Somme 1916: From Both Sides of the Wire* (BBC Two, July) finds Peter Barton reappraising what happened, with the help of files held in German archives. There will also be full coverage of commemorative events in France (BBC One, 30 June and 1 July). *Dawn on the Somme* (Radio 3, 3 July) sees Dr Kate Kennedy exploring how the Somme affected the direction of 20th-century classical music.



A gallery commemorating missing soldiers from the Somme

Battlefield archaeology

Unearthing World War II

TV Yesterday, Tuesday 12 July

Military historian David O'Keefe and filmmaker Wayne Abbott travel around Europe visiting the scenes of key battles fought between 1939 and 1945 and then undertaking a dig or two. The sites the duo visit include Juno beach, where Canadian troops landed on 6 June 1944; and Monte Cassino, scene of more than 120 days of notoriously brutal fighting during the Allied push through Italy.

The Canadian-produced show also traces events in Holland, where the 1st Canadian Army played a leading role in the country's liberation from Nazi occupation.

Big ideas

Bettany Hughes tells us about her new biographical series on Marx, Freud and Nietzsche

Genius of the Modern World

TV BBC Four,
Begins mid-June

At first glance, there's something a little confusing about the idea of classical historian Bettany Hughes presenting a trio of biographical documentaries devoted to Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. But look again and you notice that the history of ideas has been a recurring theme in her work.

"I've spent all my time looking at how big philosophical ideas don't just stay on paper, or stay as abstract ideas, but play out in the here and now," Hughes tells *BBC History Magazine*. She goes on to quote with approval Cicero saying of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from the skies and onto the street, where it belongs.

Besides, Marx, Freud and Nietzsche were all heavily influenced by their studies of ancient thinkers and societies. Nietzsche, for instance, studied classical philology.

Another thing all three shared was a capacity for "very big, grandstanding ideas", and Hughes says one of the pleasures of the series was engaging

critically with their work.

"There is a lot of the big, shouty man about all of them," she says. "For me, the common failing with all of them is that they are really brilliant thinkers but none of them seems to have the imagination to work out where those big, bold ideas might end."

Badly, is one answer. For example, we can trace the terrors of Stalin's Soviet Union to Marx. Then there's Nietzsche's influence on Hitler via *The Will to Power*, a collection drawn from his notebooks and co-edited by his sister, the nationalist and, latterly, Nazi party member Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche.

This "very troubling document... says all that matters is being powerful and everything pertains to power". Yet look at the original, adds Hughes, and you'll find a shopping list scribbled over the top of Nietzsche's notes. This was a notion he was "just trying out". It wasn't supposed to be the intellectual underpinning of a political movement.

Nietzsche himself would have been "horrified" by the way his work was twisted. Nonetheless, says Hughes, "I don't think that's a good enough excuse, because I think with great ideas comes great responsibility". ■

Bettany Hughes, pictured at the Berlin Wall, profiles three "big, shouty" but brilliant thinkers



Nietzsche would have been "horrified" by the way his work was twisted



Salvador Dalí (in diving suit) with fellow surrealists at 1936's International Surrealist Exhibition

Flower power

Sunday Feature: International Surrealist Exhibition

RADIO Radio 3, scheduled for 19 June

On 11 June 1936, the London International Surrealist Exhibition opened at the New Burlington Galleries. To borrow an image from the poet David Gascoyne, one of its organisers, "an explosion of geraniums" had arrived in the capital.

In June and July, the staid British art world was treated to such sights as Salvador Dalí delivering a lecture from a diver's suit. Although this was deemed suitable attire for someone exploring the depths of his subconscious, the

Spanish artist began to suffocate and Gascoyne had to borrow a spanner to release him.

Meanwhile, Dylan Thomas walked through the crowd carrying teacups full of boiled string and asking whether people preferred it weak or strong? Sheila Legge, the Surrealist Phantom of Sex Appeal, haunted Trafalgar Square, dressed in a satin gown, with her head completely shrouded by red roses.

Presented by poet Ian McMillan, the documentary features archive material and interviews with experts such as Michel Remy, editor of *On the Thirteenth Stroke of Midnight*, an anthology of surrealist poetry.

Romans reassessed

Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome - Empire Without Limit

DVD (IMC Vision, £11.99)

We all think we know the story of the Romans, at least in the broadest terms. It goes something like this: republic, conquest and empire, decline and fall. Watch about, oh, five minutes of Professor Mary Beard's four-part series on Rome, first aired on BBC Two in the spring, and the limitations of having such smidgens of knowledge soon become clear.

That's because, from the moment she tackles Rome's founding myths in the first

episode, it's clear Beard isn't just out to tell us what we ought to know about the Romans, their history and how they lived – but to do this and then to ask pointed, pertinent supplementary questions.

She's a restless presenter, constantly worrying at received wisdom. Why did a small town in the middle of Italy achieve such primacy? What does Roman infrastructure tell us about the society that created it? What did it mean to be a slave?

Finally, Beard tackles the fall of the empire. Or perhaps she doesn't. Might it not be, Beard argues, that the Roman empire lives on all around us in some sense, that it was transformed rather than destroyed?



Mary Beard gets to grips with Emperor Constantine's toe at the Capitoline Museum

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Melvyn Bragg will be discussing William Blake and the Bronze Age

Despite its title, **Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze** (Radio 4, Monday 4 July) details some moments when things got mighty hot on the ground. Over 15 episodes, the BBC's diplomatic correspondent, Bridget Kendall, looks back at key events in the years between 1944 and 1962, including the Korean War and the Berlin airlift. (Read more about this in our feature on page 40.)

Elsewhere on Radio 4, the subjects covered by **In Our Time** (Thursday 16 June), presented by Melvyn Bragg, include the Bronze Age collapse (c1200–1150 BC), William Blake's poetry collection *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794), and the idea of sovereignty.

UN International Yoga Day is almost upon us, a good time for Mukti Jain Campion to explore the roots of modern yoga for **The Secret History of Yoga** (Radio 4, Friday 17 June). It is a story less about a timeless Indian discipline than a multicultural history taking in European ideas about the body beautiful.

The Mine Wars (PBS America, Wednesday 29 June) looks back at the early 20th century, when miners and coal companies in West Virginia clashed over working conditions and unionisation. **The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution** (PBS America, Wednesday 13 July) explores the role of a movement that was crucial to the cultural and political awakening of African-Americans in the 1960s.

On History, **Vikings** (Tuesday 21 June) is worth catching up with. (Read our interview with the show's creator, Michael Hirst, at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine)

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OUT & ABOUT

HISTORY EXPLORER

The power of cotton

Terry Wyke and Nige Tassell visit **Queen Street Mill** in Burnley to discover the period when Lancashire dominated the global textile trade

Even though its chimney reaches 120 feet into the Lancashire skies, you have to go looking for Queen Street Mill. Or at least you would if a succession of road signs didn't carefully guide you to its home on the north-eastern outskirts of Burnley. And here, at the far end of just another unremarkable side street, it stands – the last surviving steam-powered weaving mill in the world.

Queen Street Mill is one of the few reminders of an industry that not only reshaped and redefined south-east Lancashire, but was also a fundamental base upon which the industrial revolution, and Britain's industrial might, was cast. This corner of the country took on the global cotton industry and dominated it for more than a century.

The towns dotted around Manchester – Oldham, Bolton, Stockport, Burnley and many others – became throbbing, smoke-stained hives of phenomenal productivity. Manchester itself became a boomtown, the industry's financial centre that was famously dubbed 'Cottonopolis'.

There are few more authoritative companions with which to visit Queen Street Mill than Terry Wyke, senior lecturer in social and economic history at Manchester Metropolitan University. "Most people rightly associate the cotton industry with the industrial revolution," he says. "It's

one of the central industries in that great transformation. But it's often overlooked that the cotton industry in Lancashire had a much longer history. By the 17th century, one sees cotton being imported and used to make mixed-fibre cloth, cloth that had a linen and cotton mix. In this part of the country, there developed the well-known domestic system of production, whereby clothier merchants put out raw cotton which was worked by men and women in cottages.

"This went on during the 17th century and into the 18th century. Alongside that, all-cotton cloth was being imported. This was seen as far superior to the existing cloth. It was comfortable to wear, it was convenient to wash, it was often cheaper than the existing woollen and linen fabrics, and it could be more easily printed upon. It became a much more attractive cloth."

Rush of technologies

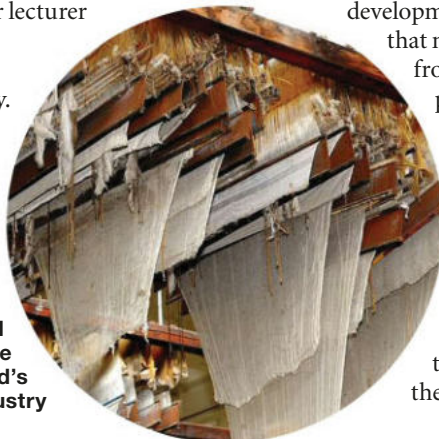
Terry explains how the rush to produce this superior cloth drove mechanical advancement. "There was a series of technological changes that led, in the 1770s and the 1780s, to that domestic system of production being challenged. The key individual in that process was Richard Arkwright. It was his development of new technologies that moved the industry away from the cottages into

purpose-built buildings.

He came up with a new production process driven by water power. As a result, the cotton mill began to appear."

Before too long, these new mills adopted the technology that really transformed the cotton industry – steam

Queen Street Mill helped Lancashire dominate the world's cotton industry

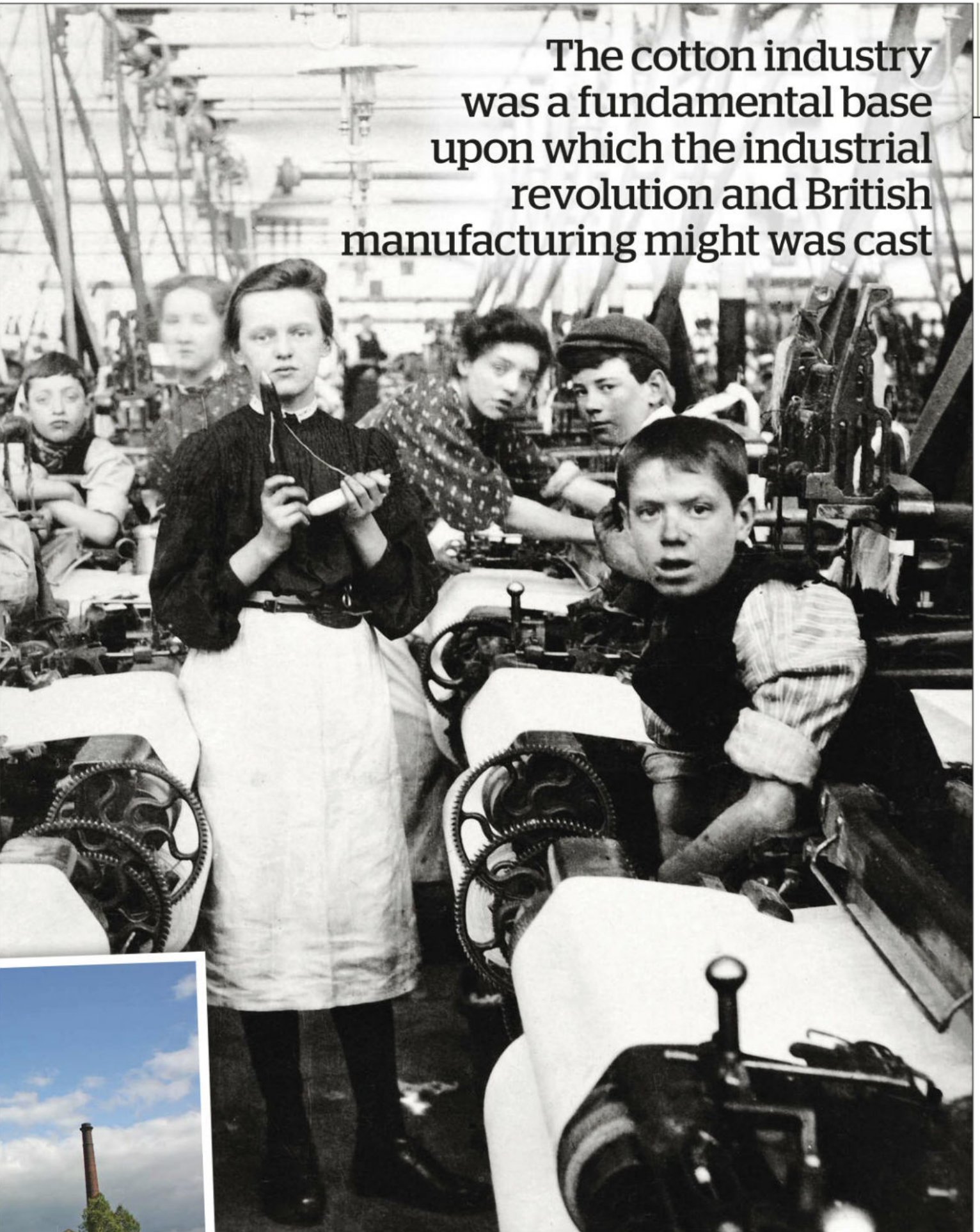


MAIN PICTURE: Children work in a Lancashire cotton-weaving factory, c1910
INSET: Burnley's Queen Street Mill is, says Terry Wyke, one of the most important of all the world's surviving cotton mills

GETTY IMAGES/MIKE JOHNSON MIKESEY PHOTOGRAPHIC/ALAN BURKWOOD



The cotton industry
was a fundamental base
upon which the industrial
revolution and British
manufacturing might was cast





The weaving shed at Queen Street Mill. In its Edwardian heyday, the shed housed hundreds of looms, most operated by female weavers

power. Soon, vast numbers of steam-powered factories were springing up in and around Manchester.

“By the late 1790s,” explains Terry, “you began to see colossal spinning mills erected in the city. But this revolution was still only a revolution in spinning. The movement of weaving into the factory really didn’t begin until the 1820s, by which time the spinning revolution had been going on for 30 or 40 years.”

And weaving is what occurred here at Queen Street Mill. We head upstairs where the 500-horsepower engine that powered the looms here is still fired up three times a day, an immaculately preserved example of the finest British engineering. Today it’s operated by a pair of proud, beaming engineers. It’s easy to get a sense of the scale of the entire operation. Not only is the engine enormous, but the power it produces is all too audible elsewhere in the mill.

The filth and the fury

The noise draws us back downstairs to the weaving shed, a vast room with the dimensions of a football pitch. It’s home to 308 looms, the belts of which are currently spinning with great fury. This isn’t the half

of it. At its peak, this mill housed more than 1,000 looms, each one noisily whirring, clanging and clacking all day long.

As well as the noise, you get a sense of the working conditions of the weavers, each of whom would be assigned four looms to oversee. While enduring high levels of dust and humidity in the mill, the weavers would be employed on piece work; they would only be paid for the amount they produced. Often their income would be affected by mechanical failure, by circumstances out of their hands.

This meant they needed to be on good terms with the tacklers, those employees charged with fixing looms in the event of breakdown. Among the museum’s range of exhibits are some perfectly preserved tackler work benches, complete with the tools of the tackler’s trade. The sooner a loom was fixed, the more money the weaver could earn, so the weaver/tackler relationship was important, and one that could be defined by favouritism or bullying.

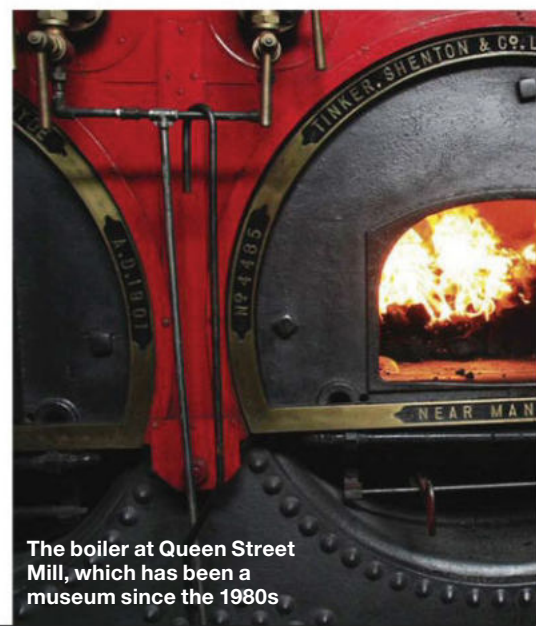
Each town became known for its own particular contribution to the cotton industry. For instance, Oldham and Bolton were both great spinning towns, but while the former was known for its cheaper

product, the latter concentrated on higher-grade fine yarn. Oldham’s place in the story of cotton is fundamental. Dubbed ‘Spindleopolis’, its mills were once said to contain more spindles than the entire US cotton industry. “It was the world’s major cotton-spinning town,” says Terry with no hint of hyperbole.

Meanwhile, Manchester was shaping itself into becoming the industry’s beating commercial heart. “Manchester took on a slightly different role to what Charles Dickens later described as the ‘Coketowns’.

It became the merchant centre for cotton, famously summed up by the historian Asa

THE 500-HORSEPOWER ENGINE THAT RUNS THE LOOMS IS AN IMMACULATELY PRESERVED EXAMPLE OF THE FINEST BRITISH ENGINEERING



The boiler at Queen Street Mill, which has been a museum since the 1980s

VISIT

Queen Street Mill



Queen Street Mill, Harle Syke, Burnley

● For opening times, contact: 01282 412555 / queenstreetmill@lancashire.gov.uk

Briggs when he argued that the typical textile industry building in Manchester was not the cotton mill, as it was in Burnley or Bolton or Oldham or Stockport. It was the warehouse. And the Royal Exchange in Manchester was where the business deals were done.”

Dizzying change

These were undeniably exciting times. “The new machinery was changing very rapidly. If you’d walked into one of the Manchester mills in the early 1800s and then walked in again in the 1840s, you would have more or less recognised the processes, but the machines were entirely different. They would have been working much faster, they would have been much more reliable. And this process of perpetual technical improvement that drove the industry went on throughout the century. The looms that we see today in this wonderful museum are from the end of the 19th century and are vastly different from those that were installed in the first weaving sheds in the 1820s and 1830s.”

According to the cliché, the Lancashire cotton trade produced for the domestic market before breakfast, before concentrating on the rest of the world for the bulk of the day. Great fortunes were made and confidence remained high into the 20th century, despite the First World War and its effect on the British economy. But other countries – particularly India and Japan – were beginning to make inroads into

Lancashire’s dominant position. The arrival of man-made fibres also accelerated the demise.

“When the decline did come, it came dramatically,” explains Terry. “The cotton industry had been the first into the industrial revolution. It had pioneered the factory system of production. But it can also be seen as the first industry to come *out* of the industrial revolution. No other industries had collapsed this way. The markets began to shrink. The towns suffered and there were extraordinarily high rates of unemployment. There were no more jobs for life.

“Mills were closed or amalgamated. New forms of technology were introduced, but none of these measures could halt the decline. By the 1960s, the cotton industry had all but disappeared. The skylines still bristled with these factory chimneys. It was just that, inside them, there were fewer and fewer people working.”

Queen Street Mill itself survived until into the 1980s, after which it became the museum it is today. Terry, who is a frequent visitor to textile mills across the world, regards it as the most significant of all the mills that still survive. To him, it’s not just regionally or nationally important: it’s internationally important.

This importance is set into sharp relief by the knowledge that the Grade I-listed mill may be threatened with closure due to the budgetary restraints faced by Lancashire County Council. As for Terry, he believes that, rather than being mothballed, Queen Street Mill should be declared a World Heritage Site. **H**

Historical advisor: **Terry Wyke**, co-editor of *Manchester: Making The Modern City* (Liverpool University Press, 2016). Words: Nige Tassell

THE COTTON INDUSTRY FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Cromford Mill

DERWENT VALLEY, DERBYSHIRE

Where the factory system was born

This is one of the key sites of the world’s first industrial revolution, where Richard Arkwright brought together carding (the cleaning and straightening of the cotton fibres) and spinning machinery to establish the modern factory system. More than 200 years later, it is a Unesco World Heritage Site. cromfordmills.org.uk

2 Quarry Bank Mill,

STYAL, CHESHIRE

Where orphans were provided for

Initially a water-powered spinning operation, Quarry Bank evolved over time, eventually becoming a steam-powered weaving mill. The idyllic site also includes workers’ accommodation and the Apprentice House, home to the orphaned children who worked at the mill. nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

3 Helmsshore Mills Textile

Museum, HELMSHORE, LANCASHIRE

Where seven mills were sited

This quiet village in Rossendale was, at one time, home to no fewer than seven working mills. Two remain – Higher Mill and Whitaker’s Mill – which have combined to provide a joint museum experience. lancashire.gov.uk

4 Royal Exchange, MANCHESTER

Where all the big deals were struck

This may be the single most important building in the entire cotton industry, as it was the crucible for worldwide deals in yarn and finished cloth. Known as the ‘parliament of the cotton lords’, it closed its doors in 1968. The trading floor is now occupied by the Royal Exchange Theatre. royalexchange.co.uk

5 New Lanark

SOUTHLANARKSHIRE

Where mill workers were housed

Another Unesco World Heritage Site, the cotton mills established here formed part of an industrial community on the banks of the river Clyde, developed by the Welsh utopian socialist Robert Owen. With extensive housing for its mill workers, New Lanark was an early example of urban planning. newlanark.org.uk



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FIVE THINGS TO DO IN JULY

From the Somme to the screen

EXHIBITION

Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies

Imperial War Museum, London
1 July–8 January 2017

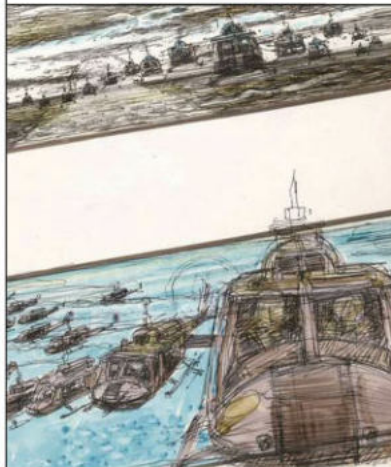
☎ 020 7416 5000

● iwm.org.uk



This major exhibition explores how filmmakers have found inspiration in the personal stories and real events of wars of the past century. Going behind the scenes of some iconic war films that have captured the imagination of cinema-goers, it brings together film clips, costumes, props, scripts, sketches and designs, alongside original archival material and artefacts from IWM's collections. Enhanced by immersive audio-visual installations, the exhibition will explore the filmmaking process and consider how films have shaped popular views of conflicts.

The programme kicks off on 30 June with a free late-night opening featuring music, art and poetry, to reflect upon the centenary of the battle of the Somme. Visitors will also have a chance to watch the Unesco-listed *The Battle of the Somme* film. Shot and screened in 1916, it was the first feature-length documentary about war. At the time it was watched by around 20 million people (almost half the population of Britain), many hoping to see images of a loved one or friend captured on film. In this, the 100th anniversary of its release, there will be a programme of screenings by members of the First World War Centenary Partnership. For details of screenings, visit www.1914.org.



GALLERY
historyextra.
com/bbchistory
magazine
/movies

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Oscar for 1945's *The True Glory*; James McAvoy in the 2007 film *Atonement*; a cine camera of the type used for *The Battle of the Somme*; a storyboard from *Apocalypse Now*

GALLERIES / FREE ENTRY

New galleries opening

National Museum of Scotland,
Edinburgh
From 8 July

☎ 0300 123 6789

● nms.ac.uk

As part of the museum's £80m makeover, 10 new galleries open this month with a world-class range of treasures on display. There are four new galleries of decorative art, fashion and design, and six on science and technology. They include rarely seen objects and new interactive displays dedicated to communication and biomedicine.



A Byzantine bowl: one of 3,000 objects in the National Museum of Scotland's new galleries

EVENT / FREE ENTRY

The Anarchy

Various venues, Winchester
9–10 July

☎ 01962 826700

● hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/event/anarchy

In 1141, King Stephen fought his cousin Empress Matilda for the throne of England in the Anarchy, the chaotic civil war that was to grip the country until 1154. In this festival, find out how the king's forces fought to defeat Matilda in Winchester. Watch the militia training, find out how knights fought and see what weapons the soldiers would have used.

EVENT

Festival of 50s

Beamish Museum,
Co Durham
14–17 July

☎ 0191 370 4000

● beamish.org.uk

The open-air museum celebrates all things 1950s with a range of displays, events and activities. Festival of 50s tells the story of the decade's social history with items from the museum's collection: from the story of the NHS to the 1950s police force, via a chance to operate a historic telephone exchange. There will also be live music from the decade, fashion to try on and a vintage fairground.

EVENT / FREE ENTRY

Medieval Weekend

Manor Farm and Country
Park, Bursledon, Hampshire
30–31 July

● roadtoagincourt.co.uk/medieval-weekend

This event sees the medieval past brought to life with re-enactments, workshops, theatre, demonstrations and storytelling. It celebrates the launch of a new interactive walkway, the King's Great Ships Trail. This woodland path leads to the river Hamble and explores the history of the great ships built nearby for King Henry V's campaign against the French in the Hundred Years' War.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

Bologna, Italy



by **Loyd Grossman**

For the latest in our historical holidays series, Loyd explores a city that whets his appetite for food, architecture and culture

New York, New York: so good they named it twice. Bologna: so interesting they nicknamed it thrice. The city rejoices in its descriptions as *la dotta, la rossa, la grassa*.

La dotta, the learned, because Bologna is the seat of the oldest university in Europe. Both its red architecture and its postwar history of communist rule make the city *la rossa*, the red. And with a devotion to eating that is outstanding even in the context of food-crazed Italy, it's little wonder that Bologna is *la grassa*, the fat.

In spite of its many and varied cultural, intellectual and gastronomic attractions, Bologna is blessedly unchoked by the hordes of mass tourism. In truth it lacks the conventional beauty of many other Italian cities. Although the triangular Piazza Santo Stefano, with its magnificent church based on the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, is one of the most photogenic squares in Italy, it is not a great city for photo opportunities.

It is, though, a remarkably engaging and manageable city, with a distinct buzz both from its role as the commercial hub of Emilia Romagna and from the continuing importance of the

university which sprawls throughout the eastern half of town, inhabiting a series of colossal graffiti-adorned palazzi.

A good place to start is in the Piazza Maggiore, whose huge scale testifies to the economic and strategic importance of Bologna throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The Basilica di San Petronio, dedicated to the city's fifth-century bishop and patron saint, in front of which Charles V was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1530, dominates the square alongside the great civic buildings of the Palazzo del Podestà and the Palazzo Re Enzo.

Stop for a moment at the memorial to the 85 people killed when a terrorist bomb went off in Bologna railway station in 1980,



Many medieval towers once crowded Bologna's skyline, and the Due Torri are the most famous of those that remain today



Bologna is blessed with 25 miles of arcaded porticos, like those at the peaceful Piazza Santo Stefano

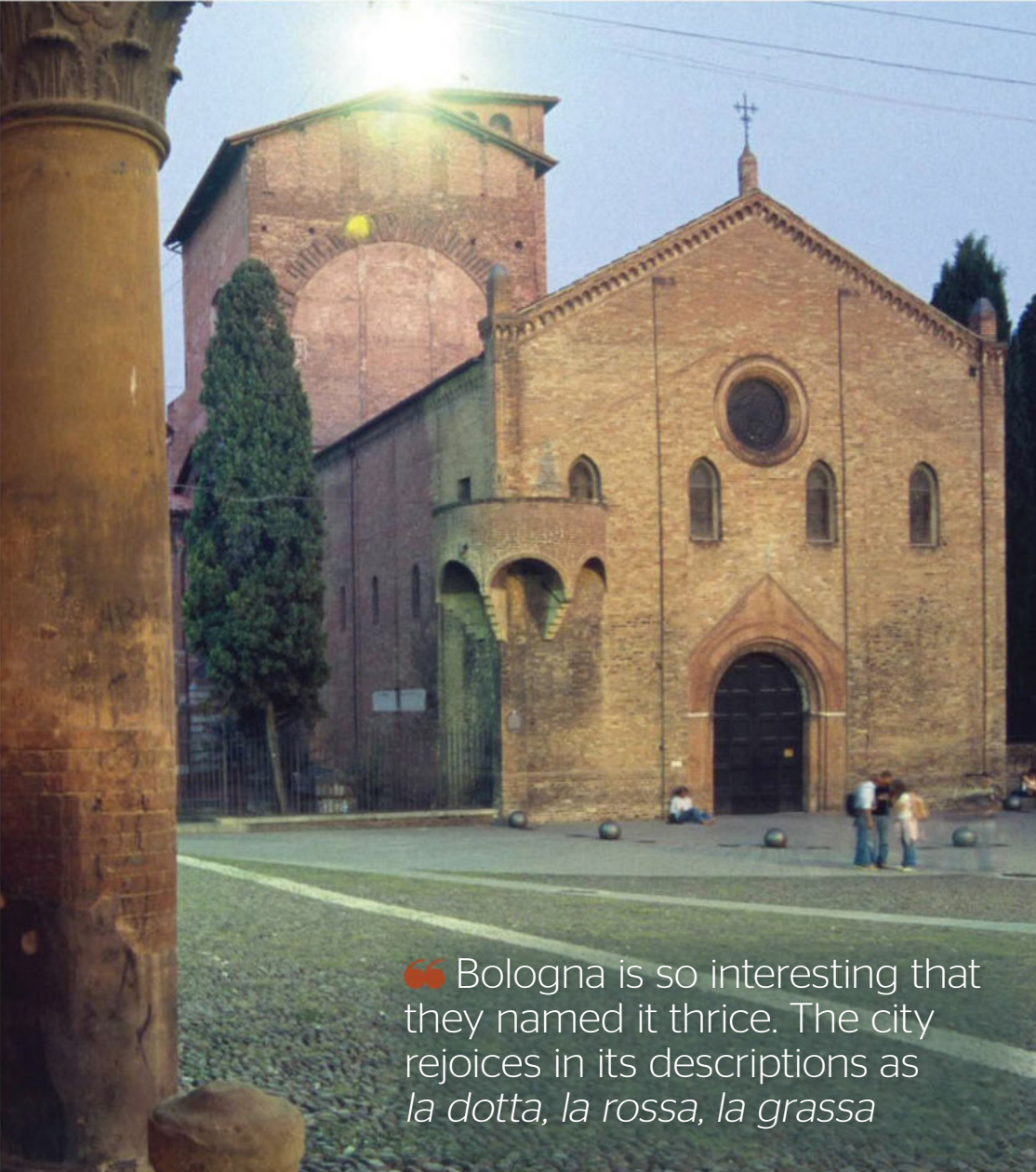
a time of extraordinary tensions that many non-Italians have forgotten. The perpetrators are still hotly debated: were they neo-fascists, agents provocateurs from the security services or other unknowns?

From Piazza Maggiore you get a good view of Bologna's famous landmark, the Due Torri, two precipitously leaning 12th-century towers, the tallest of which, the Torre Asinelli, is 97 metres high. There are 20 surviving towers, a haunting legacy of the family rivalries and chronic insecurity of life in medieval Italy.

Bologna's most distinctive architectural features are its

porticos. Almost all buildings have arcaded porticos – there are 25 miles of them, providing cover from rain and sun. Behind the porticos on the east side of the square lies the 16th-century Archiginnasio, created to be the central building of the university. It is exuberantly decorated with the heraldry of past students, but the treasure within it is the 17th-century anatomy theatre, where generations of students watched dissections.

Bologna's great medical and scientific legacy is at its most charming just around the corner in the Piazza Galvani, where a statue pays tribute to the work of Luigi Galvani, the 18th-century scientist who accidentally touched a dissected frog's sciatic nerve with an electric charge and



“Bologna is so interesting that they named it thrice. The city rejoices in its descriptions as *la dotta, la rossa, la grassa*

realised that our nervous systems were powered by electrical impulses. The unfortunate frog is commemorated too.

All but the most squeamish should visit the group of university museums that are housed in the Palazzo Poggi to admire the surreal life-sized clay anatomical models created by the obstetrics pioneer Giovanni Antonio Galli in the late 1700s. There are also marvellous examples of ship models and military architecture and the dazzling collections of Ulisse Aldrovandi, the 16th-century

savant who helped define the study of natural history.

For some insight into Bologna's artistic contributions, it's a short stroll to the Pinacoteca Nazionale, with its outstanding collection of Italian primitives and old masters, unsurprisingly featuring local heroes Carracci and Guercino.

Bologna offers high-end, designer label shopping in abundance, but food is the thing to bring home. The Quadrilatero is a tight-knit grid of streets on the site of the medieval marketplace, selling all the glories of Emilia Romagna's food culture. Parma hams, Parmesan cheeses and balsamic vinegars – some at more than 100 euros a bottle, are more alluring than anything on sale at Gucci or Prada.

Of course, Bologna's most famous gift to the world is bolognese sauce, most often served with tagliatelle and never with spaghetti. But the most emblematic and ubiquitous bolognese pasta is tortellini: tiny and delicate pasta shapes allegedly inspired by the beauty of Lucrezia Borgia's navel, stuffed with a variety of fillings and most canonically dished up in brodo, a clear strong broth. **H**

Loyd Grossman is a television presenter, art historian and food lover

Read more about Loyd's experiences in Bologna at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/bologna

Next month: Julian Humphrys visits Vézelay in Burgundy

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Thanks to Bologna's miles of portico covered pavements, even wet winter days needn't cramp your style. They give excellent sun protection too, but nonetheless I'd avoid visiting in July and August.

GETTING THERE

There are easy direct flights from the UK. Bologna airport is close to the city centre.

WHERE TO STAY

The Grand Hotel Majestic Già Baglioni is impressive old-school, high-style hospitality, as its name suggests. I prefer the slightly more low-key charm of the Hotel Corona D'Oro.

WHAT TO PACK

Comfortable shoes: it's a terrific walking city.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Most visitors return laden with Parmesan cheese, bottles of balsamic vinegar and boxes of fresh pasta. Food shops are accustomed to packing for visitors.

READERS' VIEWS

Wander, eat, drink, enjoy. It is a magical place!
Douglas Moggach

Bologna feels like the 'real' Italy. Genuine people going about their daily business.
Chris McWillis

The university is full of history and art.
Kathy Jo North



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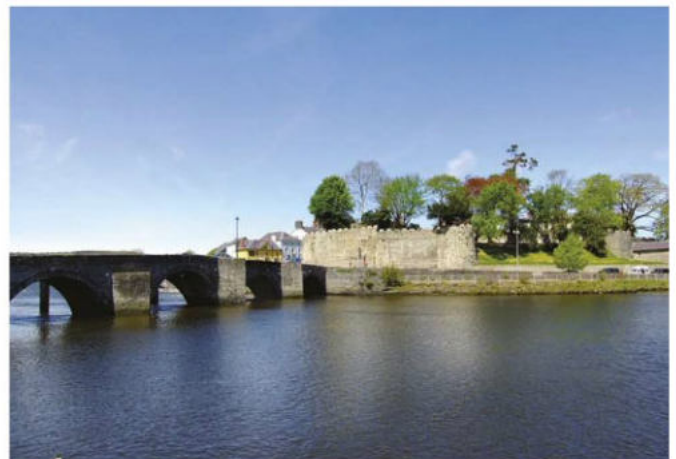
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Cardigan Castle/Castell Aberteifi

Cardigan Castle opened last year after a £12m restoration bringing this 900 year-old 2-acre site to life. Birthplace of the eisteddfod in 1176, this castle is an icon of Welsh culture and heritage. Enjoy centuries of history, dine in the glass restaurant, stroll in 19th century landscaped gardens and learn about the site's heritage with exhibitions in the Regency house. The castle also offers luxury self catering and B&B accommodation.

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Chirk Castle

Chirk Castle was completed in 1310 during the reign of Edward I as part of his ring of fortifications in North Wales. Visitors can experience 700 years of history from dank dungeons to lavish interiors, an eclectic collection, award-winning gardens and over 480 acres of landscaped parkland. Visit The National Trust Facebook and Twitter pages to stay up to date with what's on throughout the summer.

01691 777701
chirkcastle@nationaltrust.org.uk



Photo: carribuggphotography.co.uk

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Lincoln Castle

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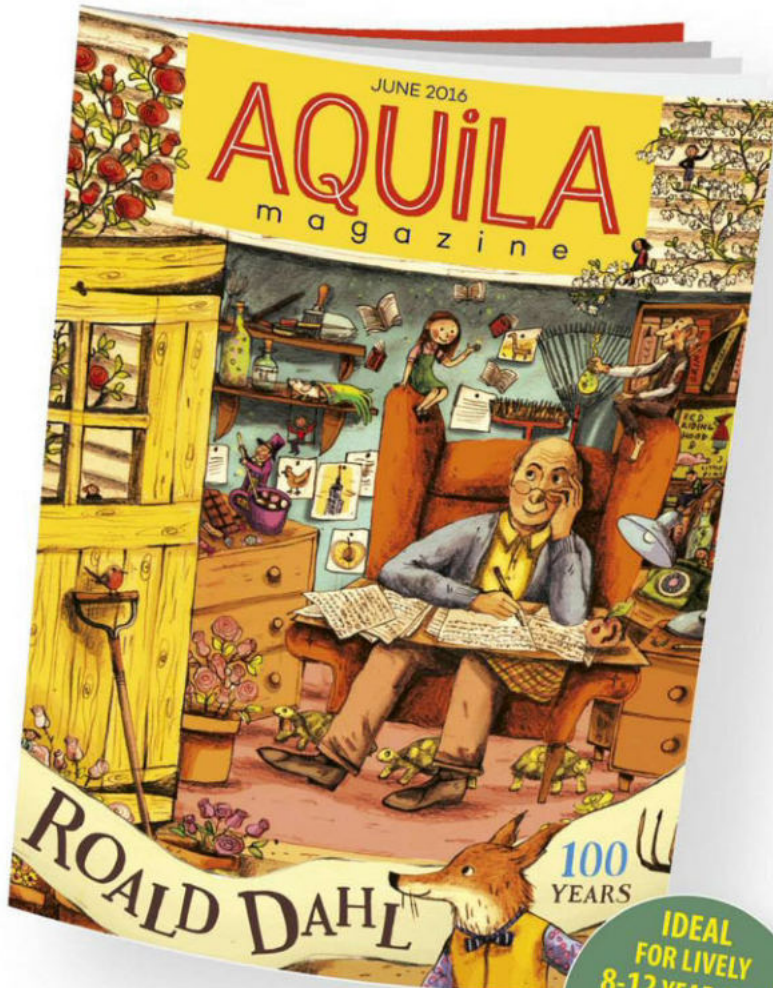
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June issue - Roald Dahl centenary

AQUILA couldn't let 2016 go by without paying tribute to the genius of Roald Dahl. This issue is packed with phizz-whizzing mischief of the most glorumptious and wondercrump variety! Children can explore the **science of taste** and have a go at making their very own **lickable wallpaper**; learn how to **calculate volume** using a jar full of sweets and investigate the **wisdom of crowds**; get to grips with gobblefunk; debate the topic of **hunting as conservation** in our regular philosophy column, and find out why so many of our best-loved book characters are norphans (that's orphans to you and me). As well as all that, there are the usual bonkers brainfeeders, puzzles, makes and competitions – and all with a devilish Dahlish twist.

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QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE QUIZZES

historyextra.com
/bbchistory-magazine/quiz

1. What links Boscobel House, Moseley Old Hall and Heale House?

2. In November 1254, Louis IX of France gave Henry III of England an extremely large present. What was it?

3. Which British artist was arrested as a spy while sketching at Calais in 1748?

4. She was born in Lincolnshire in 1812, had 10 children, managed the world's largest ironworks and translated the Mabinogion from Welsh into English. Who was she?

5. Henry VI and Richard of York were both knighted on 19 May 1426. But where?

6. a. Who was this daughter of an English peer? b. Who was her first husband? c. What position did she take up in May 1993?

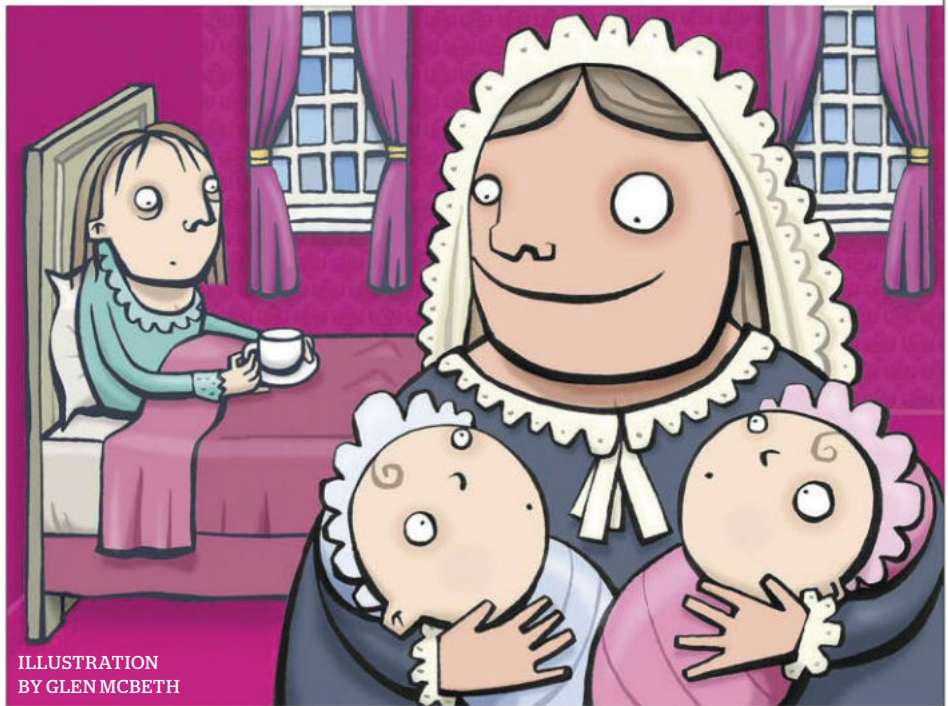


QUIZ ANSWERS

1. They were all used as hiding places by Charles II after his defeat at Worcester in 1651. **2.** An elephant **3.** William Hogarth **4.** Lady Charlotte Guest **5.** Leicester **6.** a. Pamela Digby Harriman b. Randolph Churchill c. US ambassador to France

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to BBC History Magazine, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com or submit via our website: historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine



Q When did wet nursing go out of favour in the UK?

John Ellis, by email

A If a search of the British Newspaper Archive for advertisements seeking wet nurses is anything to go by, demand peaked in the 1860s, presumably fuelled by the growing ranks of the middle classes. From there, numbers declined, and there were almost none by the 1920s.

The practice of giving babies to be breast-fed by wet-nurses had been commonplace for royalty and aristocracy for a long time before that, and was later adopted by the middle classes. The royals used aristocratic wet nurses as it was thought the child's moral development was affected by the nurse.

There were several reasons for adopting wet nursing for a new baby. Some women experienced problems feeding their babies, while others found the process distasteful. Many women (and their husbands) thought that breast-feeding made them less attractive.

The solution was for a woman who had produced strong children of her own

to then feed your baby. For poorer women, wet nursing was a relatively undemanding way of making a living. Its decline may be connected with the increasing involvement of men, and scientific knowledge of the time, in child-rearing – many medical men were sceptical or hostile about it. Urban Britain in the 19th century also saw scares over babies catching diseases from wet nurses.

At the same time, the food industry's products were becoming more hygienic and many babies were fed on recipes based on animal milk. The first infant formulas were available by the 1870s. There was also an increasing fashion for women to feed their own babies. Queen Victoria, who had hired wet nurses for all her children, was said to have been horrified to discover her daughters breast-feeding her grandchildren.

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's a simple and refreshing summer drink from the 10th century

Perfectly Persian

Sekanjabin, a historic Persian treat, is a honey and vinegar syrup used as a dip or diluted into a drink. The recipe dates to the 10th century when physician Avicenna (aka Ibn Sina) listed its medicinal benefits in *The Canon of Medicine*. In an anonymous Andalusian cookbook from the 13th century, the recipe for 'syrup of simple sikanjabin' states that "its benefit is to relax the bowels and cut the thirst and vomiting, and it is beneficial in bilious fevers".

One look at the internet and you see how popular this is today, with lots of recipes online and all sorts of versions. I've chosen the mint and cucumber recipe from *theunmanlychef.com*

INGREDIENTS

2 cups white sugar
2 cups water
½ cup white vinegar
A handful of mint
1 cucumber

METHOD

Mix the water and sugar together in a large pan and

bring to a gentle boil. Once boiling, add the vinegar and simmer gently until the mixture becomes syrupy. As it reduces you can throw in fresh bunches of mint to give the syrup a minty flavour (but spoon them out before storing the mixture).

Once it has thickened, which takes about 20 minutes, allow it to cool and then pour into a sturdy glass jar and refrigerate. It will keep for a few months. Pour a few tablespoons of the syrup over ice in a glass, add sprigs of fresh mint, then add water, then grated cucumber. Note: if undiluted and used as a dip, serve it with crisp lettuce leaves.

VERDICT

This is delicious and simple to make. The mint and cucumber make it a wonderfully refreshing drink.

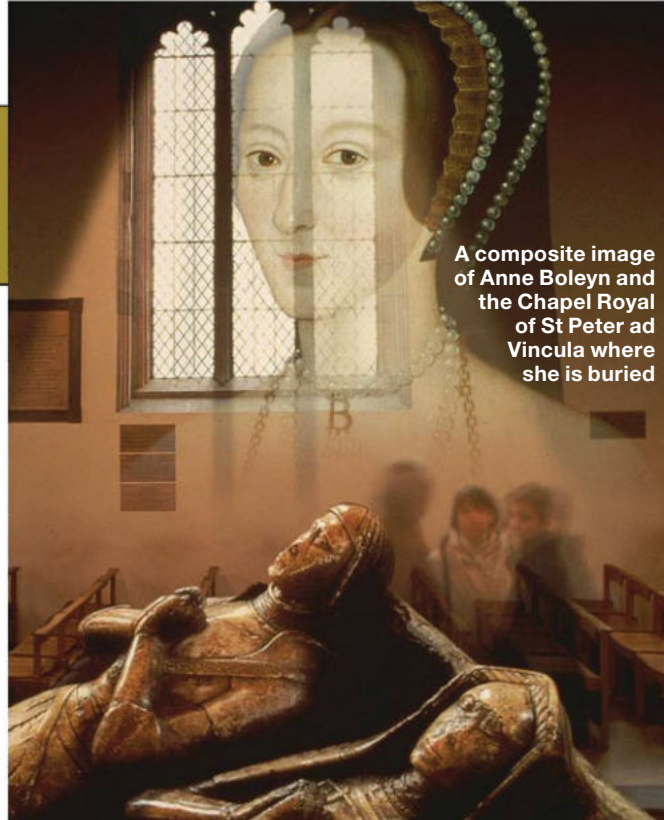
Difficulty: 1/10

Time: 40 mins (plus six hours for chilling)

Courtesy of *theunmanlychef.com*



Sekanjabin is a refreshing drink with 10th-century Persian origins



A composite image of Anne Boleyn and the Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula where she is buried

Q Where is Anne Boleyn's head?

Susan Monk, via Facebook

A The heads of traitors (and alleged traitors) were displayed on spikes on London Bridge as a warning to others. An engraving by Visscher shows Old London Bridge in 1616, with numerous heads on spikes above a gatehouse by the south bank of the Thames. Though a convicted traitor, Anne did not suffer this indignity. The popular idea that she did may derive from a report by ambassador Eustace Chapuys, who wrote: "Her head will be put upon the bridge [London Bridge], at least for some time."

What happened to Anne's head and the rest of her remains is well testified by several eyewitnesses. French diplomat Lancelot de Carles recorded that "one of the four ladies" who had attended the queen on the scaffold took up her severed head, which was covered with the handkerchief that had been thrown over it as soon as it had fallen, and carried it away. The other ladies lifted her body and, having removed the clothes and

jewels, "wrapped [it] in a white covering". They placed the remains "in a chest which stood here ready, and carried them to the chapel that is within the Tower". The chapel was that of St Peter ad Vincula, the final resting place of other victims of Henry VIII's regime, including Sir Thomas More.

Anne's remains were laid to rest before the altar, beneath the chancel pavement. There they remained until 1876, when Queen Victoria approved the restoration of the now dilapidated chapel. A surgeon named Dr Frederick Mouat described a skeleton he believed to be Anne because of the small vertebrae corresponding to her famously 'little neck'. The remains were reburied and a plaque was crafted to mark Anne's demise, alongside those of the other executed traitors who lie beneath the chapel floor.

Tracy Borman's latest book *The Private Lives of the Tudors* (Hodder & Stoughton) was published in May

GETTY

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Who was this
18th-century
Swedish botanist?
(see 27 across)



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Across

- 7 ___ Cybistra and Pontica were ancient towns situated in modern day Turkey (8)
8 King of the English who succeeded his murdered brother, Edmund I (6)
10 See 25 across
11 Soubriquet of the first woman to reign over England in her own right (6,4)
12 The capital of the Zulu king Cetshwayo, razed by the British in 1879 (6)
13 One of the most influential thinkers of modern history, who was a political exile in London until 1883 (4,4)
15 City state, brought to prominence by the fifth-century BC statesman Pericles (6)
16 Francois, 18th-century French economist of great influence, a contributor to Diderot's encyclopedia (7)
18 (One spelling of) the ruler who built Abu Simbel (7)
21 African country that gained independence in 1962 under Kayibanda (6)
23/2d Statesman/diplomat who created a highly effective intelligence network during Elizabeth I's reign (3,7,10)
25/10 Term, which historians now consider inaccurate, covering 5th to 10th centuries AD (4,4)
26 RMS ___, the British mail steamer whose interception by the US in 1861 sparked a diplomatic incident (5)
27 18th-century Swedish botanist, whose great achievement was creating binomial nomenclature for the classification of organisms (8)

Down

- 1 Part of this region of India became Bangladesh, some time after Partition in 1947 (6)
2 See 23 across

Which architect
redesigned
Syon House in
Middlesex?
(see 6 down)



- 3 A Roman citizen who was not a member of the privileged patrician class (8)
4 Egyptian royal ruler, forced to abdicate in 1952 in favour of his baby son (6)
5 Arthur William, British air marshal who became Eisenhower's deputy in 1944 (6)
6 Robert, the 18th-century architect who redesigned Syon House, Middlesex (4)
9 Region of ancient Italy and Staffordshire area associated with Wedgwood pottery (7)
14 Germany was the first country to deploy this chemical weapon (during the First World War) (7,3)
15 Joint operation by Britain and America to supply West Berlin during the Soviet blockade of 1948/49 (7)
17 Eg the resistance by the Warsaw Ghetto Jews against deportation by the Nazis to the Treblinka camp in 1943 (8)
19 The highly disciplined, militaristic Greek city state (6)
20 On the flag of the Russian Revolution,

- it symbolised the peasantry (6)
22 Name of three kings of Persia, of which the first was given the attribution 'Great' (6)
24 Medieval lord's grant of land to a vassal in return for feudal or military service (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

SOLUTION TO OUR MAY CROSSWORD

Across: 8 HMS Beagle 10/1 Cyrus the Great 11 Guevara 12 Edmund I 13 Exeter 14 Flanders 16/22A/4 The Pugachev Rebellion 18 Antioch 20 SDP 24 Arafat 27 Ephesus 28 Locarno 29 Adler 30 Alchemist
Down: 2 deValera 3 Ogham 5 Iceman 6/26 Princess Alice 7 Q-ships 9 Speke 15 Athelstan 17 Edgehill 19 Heracles 21 Petworth 22 Prefab 23 Castro 25 Farsi

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E Turner, London; S Bond, Winchester; R Nelson-Smith, London; P Burkill, Llanidloes; T Carroll, Nottingham; D Oliver, Rochester; J Mahony, Manchester

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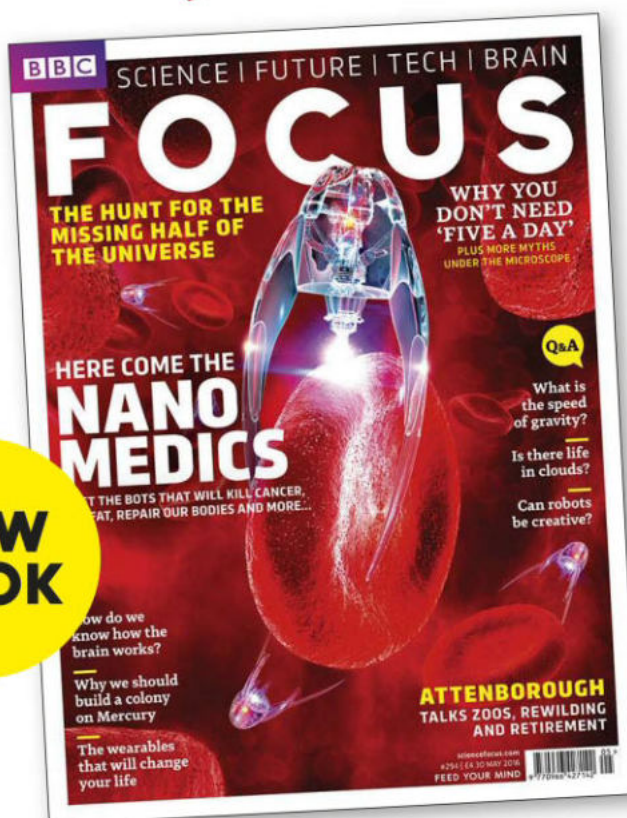
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Vol 17 No 7 – July 2016

BBC History Magazine is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Worldwide who help fund new BBC programmes.

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AUGUST ISSUE ON SALE 14 JULY 2016



Eleanor of Aquitaine

Lindy Grant describes how this medieval queen wielded immense power

The Cultural Revolution

Robert Bickers explores the movement that convulsed China half a century ago

Holidays with Hitler

Roger Moorhouse explains why the Nazis sought to control Germans' vacations



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Encounters of the ancient kind

Michael Scott reveals some surprising examples of interactions between distant cultures



"He spent hours and hours alone on the beach with a club and a ball - hitting it, and fetching it, hitting it and fetching it - until he was an absolute master of his craft"

England cricketer Joe Root chooses

Seve Ballesteros

(1957-2011)

Seve Ballesteros was one of the leading golfers of the late 20th century, and arguably the greatest ever continental European player. The Spanish sportsman won over 90 international tournaments, including the Open Championship three times (1979, 84 and 88) and the Masters twice (1980, 83). He also helped lead the European Ryder Cup team to five victories – although he struggled with form in the late 1990s due to back-related injuries. In 2008 he was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour, from which he later died.

When did you first hear about Seve Ballesteros?

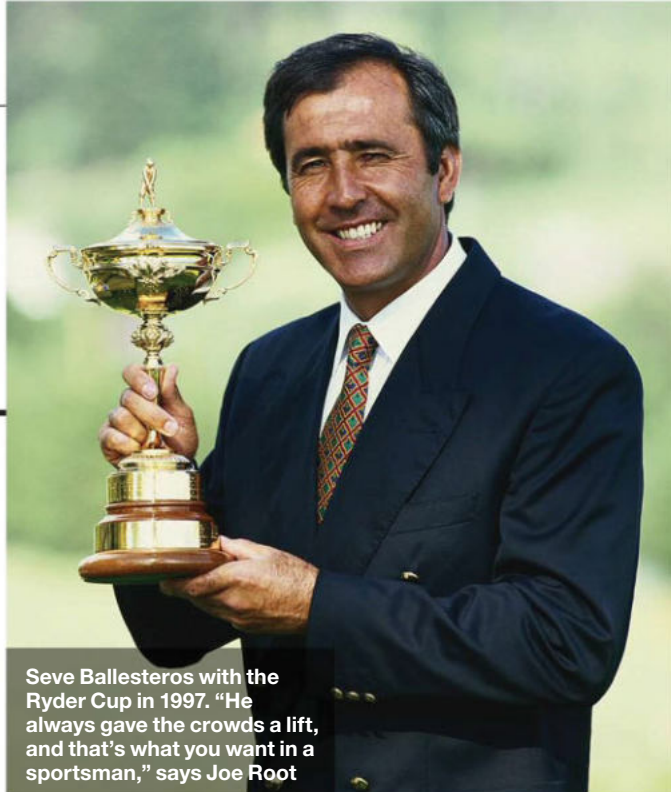
I first heard about Seve from watching television clips of the Ryder Cup when I was growing up – although he enjoyed most of his greatest sporting successes before I was born or really old enough to appreciate his brilliance as a golfer. However, just seeing his evident enjoyment of the sport, and his boundless passion for the game, made me want to know more about him – and the more I learnt, the more I found to admire.

What kind of person was Ballesteros?

Golf was his life – and, just as importantly in a way, it was in his blood. He started playing after being given a 3-iron by his brother when he was eight, and learnt his craft by practising day in, day out, on the beach. He was absolutely dedicated to his golf, turned professional when he was just 16 and instantly made his mark on the golfing world. But he was also a man of great courage as he showed in the quiet dignity with which he battled the brain cancer that eventually killed him.

What made Ballesteros a hero?

Firstly, the fact that he was such an outstanding player, and remained at the top of his game for so long. Secondly, the way he spent hours and hours alone on the beach with a club and a ball – hitting it, and fetching it, hitting it and fetching it – until he was an absolute master of his craft. Thirdly, his whole approach to golf, and his sheer enjoyment of the game – he always gave the watching crowds a lift, and that's what you want in a sportsman. Lastly, the way in which he chased his dream and made it come true. All of which, in their own way, are equally inspirational.



Seve Ballesteros with the Ryder Cup in 1997. "He always gave the crowds a lift, and that's what you want in a sportsman," says Joe Root

What was his finest hour?

It's hard to single out one. For me, his victory in the 1979 Open Championship, making him the youngest 20th-century winner of the tournament, must rank as one of his finest moments. Having said that, I think he once said that the putt he holed on the 18th green at St Andrews to win the 1984 Open Championship was "the happiest moment" of his sporting life – so maybe he regarded that as his finest hour. The personal courage with which he fought cancer was surely another 'finest hour'.

Are you a history buff?

I have to admit that I wasn't a massive fan of history at school! But the older I get, the greater my interest in the past.

Are there any other figures from further back in time that you particularly admire?

Being a proud Yorkshireman, it's perhaps no great surprise that I'm a fan of the Test cricketer Len Hutton (1916–90), who played before and after the Second World War as an opening batsman for Yorkshire and England. Another figure I admire is the legendary Australian batsman Don Bradman (1908–2001), perhaps the greatest cricketer of all time.

Can you see any parallels between Ballesteros's life and your own?

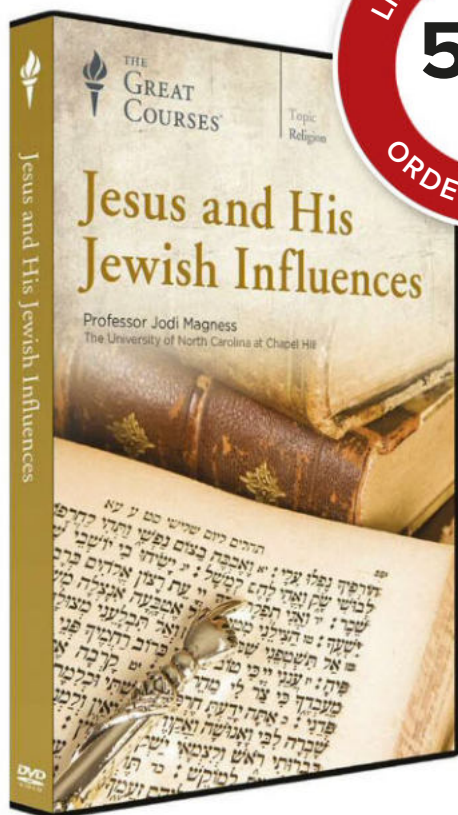
Well, I enjoy golf, but I'm never going to be in his league! Seriously though, Seve always played with a bit of a smile on his face – and I try to do the same thing. Like him, I'm always desperate to succeed too.

If you could meet Ballesteros, what would you ask him?

I'd like to ask him how he managed to stay at the top of his game for so long. Just how did he keep that fire in his belly, the fire that set him apart from so many of his contemporaries? **II**

Joe Root was talking to York Membership

Joe Root was one of Wisden's five Cricketers of the Year in 2014. His book *Bringing Home the Ashes: Winning with England* was published by Hodder & Stoughton in 2015



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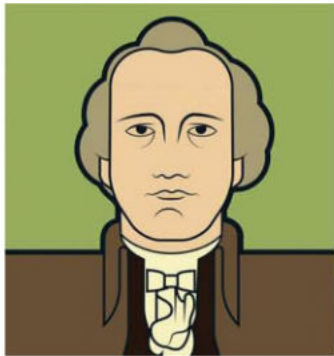
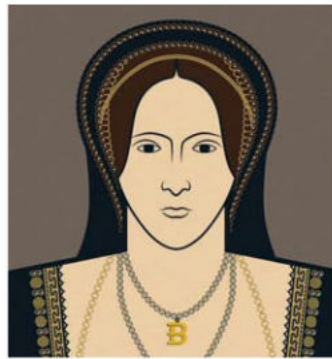
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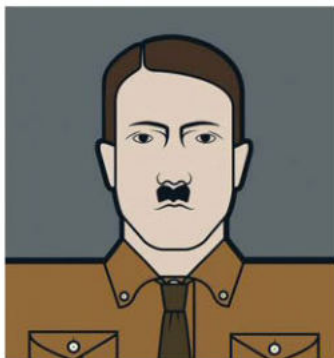
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2016



HISTORY HOT 100



We asked readers and historians to vote for the historical figures that most interest them at the moment. The results are in: **this is the History Hot 100 for 2016...**

WORDS: MATT ELTON / ILLUSTRATIONS: ANDY TUOHY / DESIGN: RACHEL DICKENS



Welcome to this year's *BBC History Magazine* Hot 100 list, featuring the historical figures that are grabbing your attention in 2016. We asked you to each nominate up to three people from any historical period, as long as they died more than 30 years ago. The full details are presented here, together with a look at how the results compare to last year's inaugural list. They make for fascinating reading...

Matt Elton, reviews editor

HISTORY HOT 100

The list: 100-11 (in reverse order)

This year's list features a diverse cast of historical characters, many of whom appear for the first time

100 Thomas Wolsey ★	71 Ada Lovelace ★	41 Martin Luther King ↓ (-15)
99 Imre Nagy ★	70 Ragnar Lodbrok ↑ (+3)	40 William the Conqueror ↑ (+14)
98 Henrietta Maria of France ★	69 Akhenaten ★	39 Charles Darwin ↑ (+18)
97 Grace Dalrymple Elliott ★	68 Horatio Nelson ↓ (-50)	38 Anne of Cleves ★
96 Alcuin of York ★	67 Patrick Pearse ★	37 Alexander the Great ↓ (-12)
95 Lord Mountbatten ★	66 Boudica ↓ (-26)	36 Catherine of Aragon ↑ (+2)
94 Thomas Browne ★	65 Edward and Richard, the Princes in the Tower ★	35 Tutankhamun ★
93 Constance Markievicz ★	64 Empress Matilda ↓ (-14)	34 John Hunyadi ★
92 William Pearce ★	63 Charlotte Brontë ★	33 Elizabeth of York ↔ (0)
91 Seymour Fleming ★	62 Karl Marx ↓ (-25)	32 Edward IV ↑ (+4)
90 Alexander von Humboldt ★	61 Richard of York ★	31 Katherine Parr ★
89 Margaret of Anjou ★	60 Empress Elisabeth of Austria ★	30 Catherine the Great ★
88 Charlemagne ↓ (-30)	59 Clement Attlee ↓ (-32)	29 Cicero ↑ (+51)
87 Walt Disney ★	58 Albert Einstein ↑ (+6)	28 Nefertiti ↑ (+25)
86 Joan of Arc ↑ (+14)	57 Jesus Christ ↓ (-41)	27 Julius Caesar ↑ (+4)
85 Charles I ★	56 Richard the Lionheart ↑ (+19)	26 Margaret Beaufort ↑ (+40)
84 Katherine Swynford ↓ (-25)	55 Martin Luther ↓ (-8)	25 Henry VII ↓ (-3)
83 Benjamin Franklin ↑ (+7)	54 Cesare Borgia ★	24 Oliver Cromwell ↓ (-4)
82 Nicholas II ↓ (-13)	53 Bonnie Prince Charlie ★	23 Duke of Wellington ↓ (-15)
81 King John ↓ (-74)	52 Harold II ↑ (+42)	22 Victoria ↑ (+27)
80 Anne Neville ★	51 Louis XIV ↑ (+35)	21 Mary, Queen of Scots ↑ (+21)
79 William Cecil ★	50 Mahatma Gandhi ↑ (+26)	20 Charles II ↑ (+19)
78 Muhammad ↓ (-26)	49 Thomas Jefferson ★	19 Mathias I ★
77 John F Kennedy ↓ (-22)	48 Emmeline Pankhurst ↑ (+26)	18 Elizabeth Woodville ↑ (+17)
76 Samuel Pepys ★	47 Joseph Stalin ↓ (-4)	17 Abraham Lincoln ↓ (-4)
75 Franklin D Roosevelt ↓ (-31)	46 Oscar Wilde ★	16 Henry II ↑ (+13)
74 Benito Mussolini ★	45 Thomas More ★	15 Alexander Hamilton ★
73 Charlotte of Wales ★	44 Isaac Newton ↓ (-16)	14 Mary I ↑ (+9)
72 Leonardo da Vinci ↓ (-42)	43 Lady Jane Grey ↑ (+2)	13 Alfred the Great ↑ (+28)
	42 Edward the Black Prince ★	12 Napoleon Bonaparte ↑ (+2)
		11 Henry V ↑ (+8)

★ New entry

↑ Up (by number of places)

↓ Down (by number of places)

↔ Non-mover

COMMENT / Matt Elton on the new trends in this year's list
More women, more Tudor wives – and this year's vote emphasises the diversity of historical interest

Running this survey on an annual basis offers the chance to explore changing historical tastes: which individuals have bitten the dust in the past 12 months, and which are newly enjoying public interest?

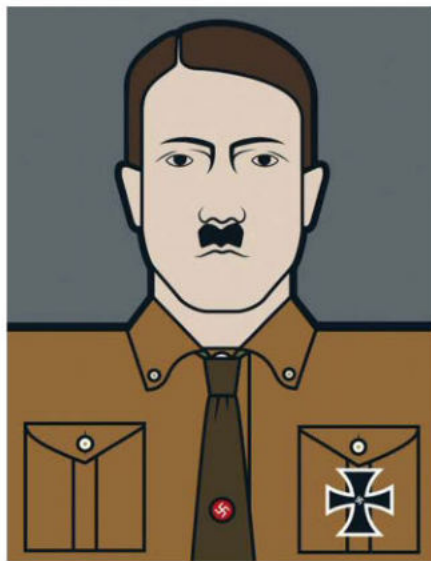
In the former category, few figures have suffered as badly as King John, now at number 81 after riding high at 7 in last year's chart. And, in the latter group, Cicero and Harold II have done well. Our experts explore the possible reasons for these changes in the following pages.

There is also a healthy crop of new entries. Anniversaries seem to be important: the centenary of the Easter Rising, for instance, perhaps explains the presence of

several major figures from Irish history (including brothers Patrick and William Pearse, at number 67 and 92). TV and film are also key. How else can the continued inclusion of Viking hero Ragnar Lodbrok be explained other than his portrayal in a TV drama? But it's not just manly men: the list features more women than last year, including four of Henry VIII's wives.

This year's results also reveal the past masters who continue to fascinate. The Tudors again feature strongly, although perhaps surprisingly do not represent the most popular century. Those details, and the identity of the figure in the top slot, follow. Starting, at number 10, with...

Top 10



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY TUOHY

10 Adolf Hitler

↑ (+5)

This survey features the historical figures that most interested you, which does not mean that they were liked – a fact perhaps most strikingly illustrated in our 10th-highest entry.

"Hitler is profoundly significant historically, and a new biography and revelations about his private life mean that **he has not been far from the news recently**," says expert Roger Moorhouse. And interest in the Nazi leader shows no signs of abating: indeed, he finishes five places higher than in our 2015 survey.



9 William Marshal

↑ (+1)

Knight, advisor, tournament fighter: William Marshal (c1147–1219) had quite the CV – not to mention the five kings he called employers (Henry II, Henry the Young King, Richard, John and Henry III).

"Two aspects of his life stand out," says Thomas Asbridge, author of the Marshal biography *The Greatest Knight* (Simon & Schuster, 2015). "Firstly, his **unprecedented rise to the heights of power and social status**, and secondly, the abiding sense that he believed in the value of chivalry and honour."

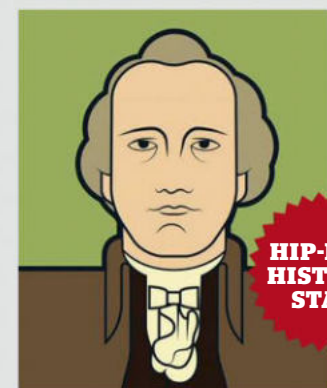
New for 2016

Top 10 new entries this year

- 1 Alexander Hamilton (15)
- 2 Mathias I (19)
- 3 Catherine the Great (30)
- 4 Katherine Parr (31)
- 5 John Hunyadi (34)
- 6 Tutankhamun (35)
- 7 Anne of Cleves (38)
- 8 Edward the Black Prince (42)
- 9 Thomas More (45)
- 10 Oscar Wilde (46)

COMMENT / Simon Middleton

"Alexander Hamilton served as one of George Washington's key aides in the American War of Independence, going on to introduce financial plans that some suggest put US credit and manufacturing on a solid foundation in Washington's first presidency. Others point to his admiration of aristocracy and suspicion of democracy as less wholesome traits. The Broadway musical *Hamilton*, based on Ron Chernow's well-received and admiring biography, has doubtless moved him up the rankings." *Simon Middleton is a senior lecturer in US history at the University of Sheffield*



HIP-HOP HISTORY STAR

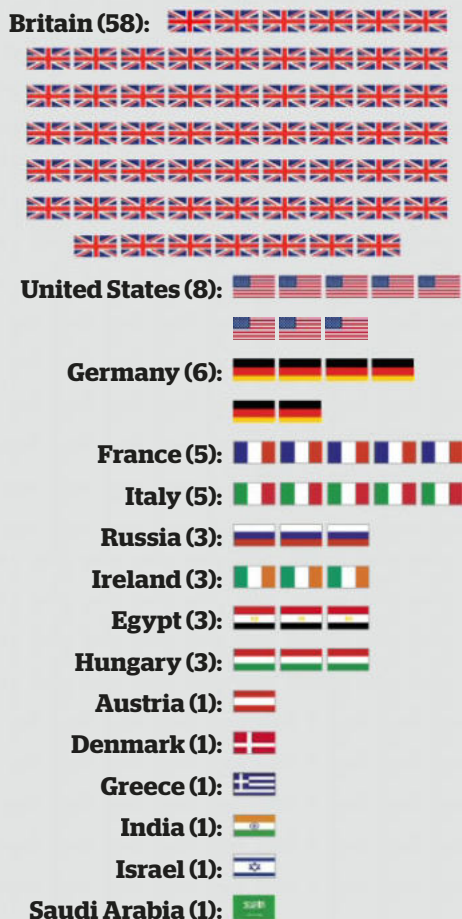
US founding father Alexander Hamilton is alone in this list in featuring in a hip-hop musical

Figures from British history dominate the top 100



Nations with which the Hot 100 are most associated

(Based on modern borders)



COMMENT / Matt Elton

The smaller numbers here are interesting: ancient Greece was an enormously influential culture, yet has yielded only Alexander the Great in this list. That's fewer than Hungary (linked with king and emperor Mathias I, general and statesman John Hunyadi and politician Imre Nagy). Israel, India and Saudi Arabia all have one spiritual figure apiece, meanwhile.

Risers & fallers

The top 10 biggest risers since 2015...

- Cicero** ↑ 51
- Harold II** ↑ 42
- Margaret Beaufort** ↑ 40
- Louis XIV** ↑ 35
- Alfred the Great** ↑ 28
- Victoria** ↑ 27
- Emmeline Pankhurst** ↑ 26
- Mahatma Gandhi** ↑ 26
- Nefertiti** ↑ 25
- Mary, Queen of Scots** ↑ 21

...and the 10 biggest fallers

- Karl Marx** ↓ 25
- Boudica** ↓ 26
- Charlemagne** ↓ 30
- Franklin D Roosevelt** ↓ 31
- Clement Attlee** ↓ 32
- Muhammad** ↓ 36
- Jesus Christ** ↓ 41
- Leonardo da Vinci** ↓ 42
- Horatio Nelson** ↓ 50
- King John** ↓ 74

COMMENT / Marc Morris

"In spite of his failure, Harold is normally viewed as a hero. John, by contrast, ran away"

"The fall of King John and the rise of Harold II in this year's Hot 100 comes as no real surprise. John enjoyed the limelight in last year's chart (where he came seventh) because 2015 was the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta – the charter of liberties wrrenched from him at Runnymede that later acquired global significance.

This year is the 800th anniversary of John's death at Newark in October 1216, but it was always going to be overshadowed by the 950th anniversary of the battle of Hastings, which occurred in the same month in 1066. Hastings, of course, is where Harold met his end, explaining his current celebrity.

Being at the top of the historical agenda leads to reputations being reassessed. King John's character and career were reviewed last year, and the consensus remained that he was indeed a rotter. Harold, in spite of his failure at Hastings, is normally viewed as a hero.

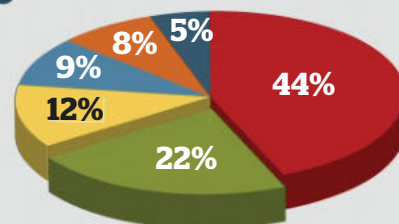
Whatever judgments are reached this year, one thing that should count in Harold's favour is his readiness to meet the Normans in battle. John, by contrast, responded to a French invasion of England in 1216 by running away."

Marc Morris is the author of King John: Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta (Hutchinson, 2015)

Royal figures make up almost half the list

Field with which the Hot 100 are most associated

- Royalty
- Politics
- Faith and ideas
- Military
- Arts and culture
- Science



8 Thomas Cromwell

↓ (-4)

Henry VIII's chief statesman Thomas Cromwell (c1485–1540) falls four places from 2015, perhaps because the TV adaptation of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* was then fresher in our minds. A skilled adviser, Cromwell was still executed for treason (one of the many people in this list to meet a sticky end – see page 7).

“Cromwell **masterminded some of the most seismic events in our history**, from the break with Rome to the revolution in government,” says historian Tracy Borman. “Far more than a cynical bureaucrat in search of personal gain, he was committed to reform, and undoubtedly Henry VIII's most faithful servant.”



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY TUOHY

7 Eleanor of Aquitaine

↑ (+2)

One of the **wealthiest, most powerful European women of her time**, Eleanor of Aquitaine (c1122–1204) was queen consort of Louis VII of France, wife of Henry II and queen of England.

Several of you cited her status as a female role model as their reason for her nomination. “Arguably the most powerful woman of the High Middle Ages, and a great historical figure for young girls to look up to,” said Noelle Greenwood, while Wendy Ruocco enthused about “a woman who survived in a man's world, not merely because of beauty but for her brain, to equal and even surpass the difficult men in her life”.

6 Winston Churchill

↓ (-4)

Along with Adolf Hitler, British prime minister Winston Churchill (1874–1965) is the only other figure in the top 10 to have been alive within the past century – suggesting that the Second World War remains the event from the modern era that stands out most in people's minds.

“Churchill is a hardy perennial on lists such as these,” says historian Andrew Roberts. “It seems like much less than half a century ago since he died, **so ever-present is he in the national consciousness**. Both sides in this year's EU referendum have argued he would have supported their position, underlining his continued ubiquity.”

Gender

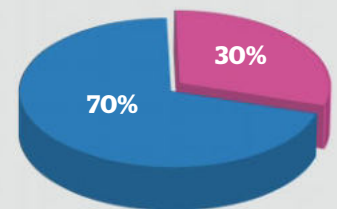


NOW WITH MORE WOMEN

Catherine the Great, new in at no. 30. The 2016 list features more women than last year's

Thirty per cent of the list is female

● Women
● Men



COMMENT / June Purvis

“The female figures in the list are overwhelmingly queens or members of the landed gentry, giving us a lopsided view of women in the past.

Some important social reformers, such as Constance Markievicz and Emmeline Pankhurst, do feature. Yet other remarkable women do not: Mary Carpenter, who set up schools for children of the street, and Marie Stopes, who worked to free women from unwanted pregnancies. Mary Wollstonecraft, founder of Anglo-American feminism, does not make it either, while Karl Marx does. It will be interesting to see how things develop next year.”

June Purvis, emeritus professor of women's and gender history at the University of Portsmouth

In brief

Top five... people born outside Britain

- 1 Eleanor of Aquitaine
- 2 Adolf Hitler
- 3 Napoleon Bonaparte
- 4 Alexander Hamilton
- 5 Henry II

Top five... monarchs

- 1 Richard III
- 2 Elizabeth I
- 3 Henry VIII
- 4 Henry V
- 5 Alfred the Great

Cut! Five high- profile casualties from 2015's list

(Position in 2015 listed in brackets)

- 1 Benjamin Disraeli (12)
- 2 William Gladstone (17)
- 3 Alan Turing (24)
- 4 Marie Antoinette (32)
- 5 Cleopatra (46)

The most popular boys' names...

William
Thomas
Henry

...and the most popular girls' names

Elizabeth
Anne
Catherine

COMMENT / **Tracy Borman** on entries five to two

"The tales of the Tudors are so remarkable, they read like a far-fetched soap opera"

"So the Tudors have, once again, stolen nearly all of the top slots. They dominate the bestseller lists, are rarely off our screens, and make people flock to places such as Hampton Court. I freely admit to suffering from what one journalist recently termed 'Tudormania'. So what is it about these monarchs that continue to hold us in such thrall 500 years later?"

Much of the appeal is obvious. The tales of these larger-than-life characters are so remarkable that they read like a far-fetched soap opera. And in the background are seismic events: the Reformation, revolution in government, overseas exploration and unprecedented vibrancy in the arts. It was a stridently self-confident era.

Yet for me, one of the most compelling

reasons for our love of all things Tudor is the portraiture. Thanks to the rise of realism in art during the Renaissance, we can get a clear sense not only of their appearance and the magnificence of their dress, but of their character too. It brings long-dead monarchs tantalisingly close.

So that's one theory: extraordinary characters and events + realistic portraiture = long-lasting popularity. But the true appeal of the Tudors goes beyond this simple formula. They spark an unquantifiable emotional reaction that keeps us coming back for more. And, as far as I'm concerned, long may it continue!"

Tracy Borman is the author of books including The Private Lives of the Tudors (Hodder and Stoughton, 2016)



5 (+1) Henry VIII

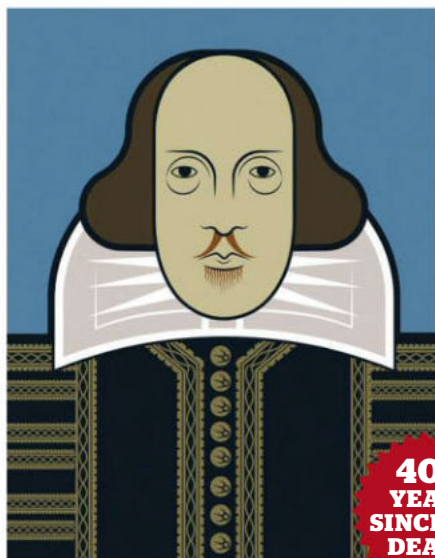
He may be one of the most famous kings in history, yet Henry VIII (1491–1547) was not nominated by any of the experts who took part in this poll – making him the highest-placed individual to achieve this dubious honour. So why is he so fascinating? Some of you noted the theory, made this year, that a jousting injury had permanently affected his character. Others cited his **"fearsome temper" and "hideous personal life"**. Of course Henry's reign also led to seismic and permanent changes to the role of parliament, the nation's religious identity and relationship with the rest of the world.



4 (+1) Anne Boleyn

Four of Henry VIII's six wives make this year's list, but Anne Boleyn (c1501–1536) stands out for her tumultuous political and personal life. Henry's infatuation with her sparked the English Reformation, but Anne failed to give him the son he longed for and was executed following charges of conspiracy. Debate about whether she was **guilty or the victim of court intrigue** still rages, even among those who voted in this poll: "An ambitious climber who won the crown but eventually paid the price," observed Carol Head, but Laura Emilie argued that Boleyn's "legacy had been tarnished by the intentions of others".

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY TUOHY



**400
YEARS
SINCE HIS
DEATH**

3 William Shakespeare

↑ (+8)

Britain's most famous writer breaks into the top 10 on the back of the 400th anniversary of his death. Shakespeare's diverse set of plays and sonnets have had an **enormous impact on global culture**, and many remain as evocative and stirring as they were centuries ago.

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, much about the playwright's life remains a mystery. Yet the fevered speculation about everything from his authorship to his sexuality is perhaps only a reflection of our fascination with the Bard.

COMMENT / Paul Edmondson

"Shakespeare is not just for royalty - everyone inherits his legacy"

"Four hundred years after his death, Shakespeare is more popular than ever – as proven by his elevated ranking on this year's Hot 100 list. Interestingly, he is only beaten by two individuals who played an important role in his life and career. Elizabeth I, for instance, enjoyed Shakespeare's plays over the Christmas seasons from 1594. Yet his works aren't just for kings and queens: everyone who loves Shakespeare throughout the world inherits his legacy and can celebrate his life and works. In July we're set to reopen New Place, Shakespeare's family home from 1598. Come and join the party!"

Paul Edmondson is head of learning and research at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (shakespeare.org.uk)



2 Elizabeth I

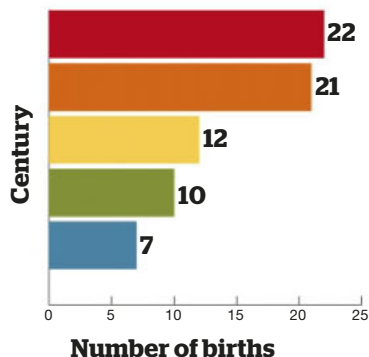
↑ (+1)

Often cited by those who nominated her as "England's best ruler", Elizabeth I (1533–1603) is hailed for her political prowess, her lengthy reign and her navy's victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. Yet many of you also cited **her personal attributes and her romantic life** as reasons for their choice: "She needed no man!" stressed one voter, while another praised her "tenacity and refusal to compromise". Whichever aspect most appeals, it seems that much about Elizabeth's reign – from its imagery and court to its spirit of adventure – continues to grab our imagination.

Sorry, Tudors... the Victorians reign victorious

Top five centuries of birth

- 19th century
- 15th century
- 18th century
- 16th century
- 17th century



Deaths

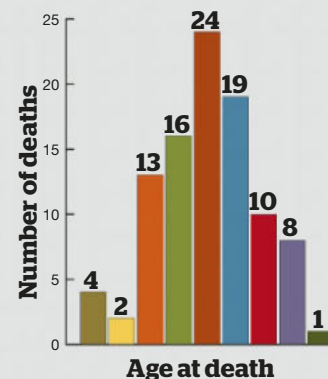
COMMENT / Matt Elton

The question behind this part of our analysis was simple: did our Hot 100 live long lives or die horrible deaths – or both? We explored those cases in which the details of death were definitively known, and the results suggest that while living until old age definitely helped, so too did a gory death.

Most people were at least 50 when they died

Age of Hot 100 at death

- 10 - 19
- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 - 69
- 70 - 79
- 80 - 89
- 90+

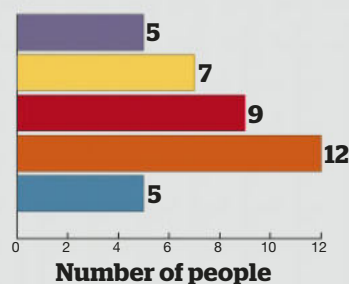


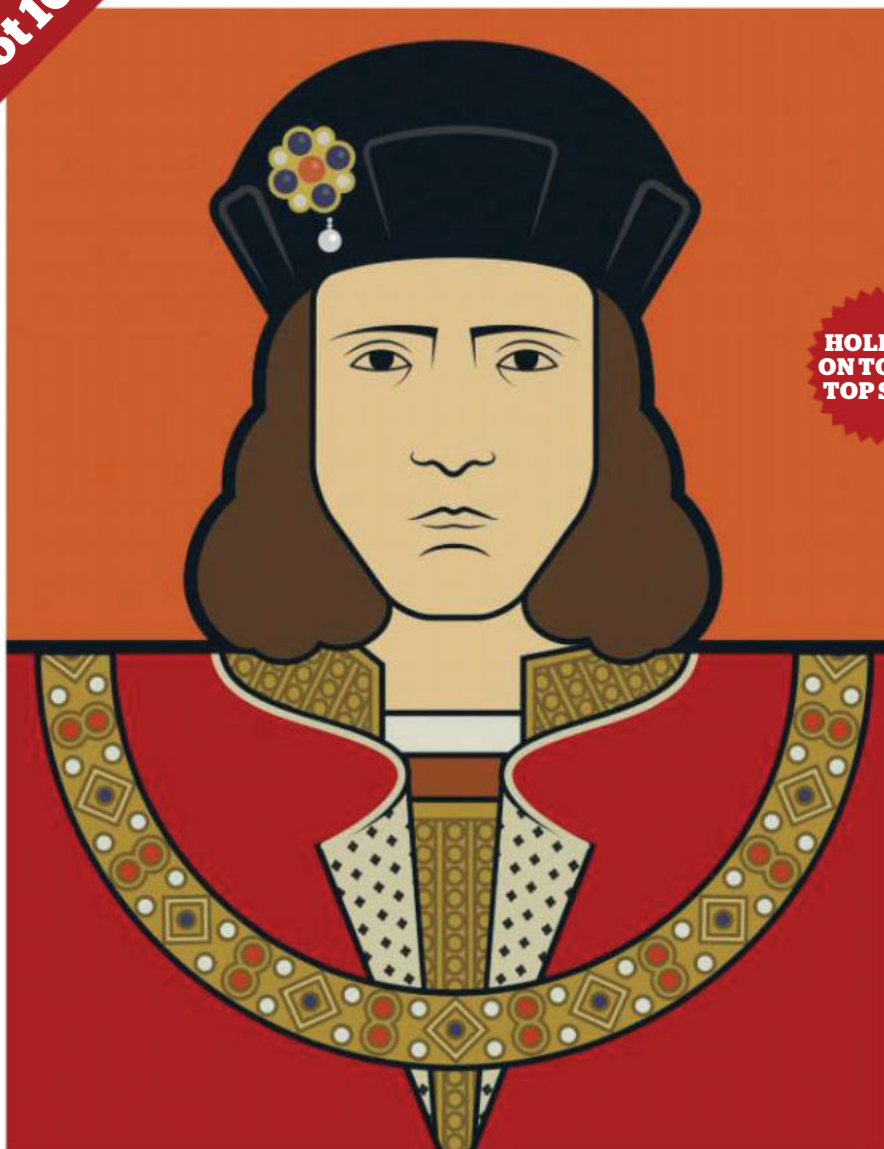
The Hot 100's deaths were often grisly

Top five causes of death

(Of those definitively known)

- Cancer
- Stroke
- Assassinated
- Executed
- Killed in battle





HOLDING
ON TO THE
TOP SPOT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY TUOHY

1 Richard III

He's loved, he's loathed, he's been dug up and reburied: emerging victorious once again, it's the divisive Plantagenet king Richard III (1452–85). Killed in battle at Bosworth and hastily buried at Grey Friars in Leicester, his remains were uncovered in an archaeological dig in 2012. DNA tests on the skeleton confirmed that it was that of the king, and it was reburied in the city's cathedral in a service watched by millions.

Yet not all of the attention afforded to Richard is positive. He **remains controversial due to his suspected involvement in the disappearance of his nephews**, the princes in the tower, who make their first appearance on this year's list (at number 65). The debate over his role has raged for centuries and, as his continued dominance of this poll suggests, looks set to secure him in the public consciousness for years to come.

COMMENT / Chris Skidmore "Richard III's story is pure drama that makes him box-office material"

"It's no surprise that Richard continues to capture the popular imagination: even without the discovery of his body and reburial last year, his story is pure drama that rivals his Shakespearean caricature and makes him box-office material. Richard's life and reign may ultimately have ended in failure, but he has inspired generations to fight against a 'Tudor version' of history and clear his name. I'm sure he will continue to fascinate and appeal in equal measure for centuries."

Chris Skidmore's biography of Richard III is set to be published in 2017

"Sometimes the clichés are true..."

ANALYSIS / Dan Jones

It has become a cliché to say that history in Britain, from the classroom to the BBC, is mostly about Tudors and Nazis. As with most clichés, this springs from a truth. The top five entries in the Hot 100 all have some connection to the Tudors: ranging from Richard III, whom Henry VII knocked off his perch at the battle of Bosworth in 1485, to Shakespeare, who entertained Tudor theatregoers in the 1590s by writing about that same incident. Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, the three lead characters in *Wolf Hall*, occupy positions four, five and eight.

Hot on their tails are Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler – reflecting our continuing fascination with the Second World War above all other conflicts, despite all the public remembrance that has accompanied the First World War's centenary.

So it is almost a Tudor-Nazi clean sweep. But not quite. Squeaking into the top 10 are two great figures of the English Middle Ages: the soldier and statesman William Marshal, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, the 12th-century queen whom Marshal served as a young man. The Plantagenets have arrived. I am saying nothing.

The extended list includes some lesser-studied figures: the Hungarian general John Hunyadi and Scottish courtesan Grace Dalrymple Elliott are hardly household names. But they have some way to go to break into next year's top 10, let alone threaten the dominance of Richard III, who tops the chart for a second year. First he helps Leicester City win the Premier League and now this. Is there anything the great man cannot do? *Dan Jones is an author and broadcaster whose books include The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses and the Rise of the Tudors (Faber and Faber, 2014)*

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